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MONTH

OF

THE SACRED HEART:

CONTAINING

Three Novenas and a Triduum

FOR ALL THE DAYS OF THE MONTH OF JUNE.

H-BP
2591
L48

By FATHER ALEXIS LEFEBVRE,
OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

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1895

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

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TO

THE RIGHT REVEREND

MONSEIGNEUR DE MARGUERYE,

Bishop of Autun, France.

My Lord,

Having just completed a little book on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, I shall feel most happy if you will allow it to appear under your auspices, and with your approbation.

It would indeed be impossible for me to dedicate it otherwise, since the book owes its existence to your Lordship.

It was at Paray-le-Monial, in your favoured diocese, that the idea of the work first occurred to me, at the foot of that altar where our Lord revealed all the secrets of His Heart to the Blessed Margaret Mary. In these holy places, and more especially in the inner chapel of the convent, where, by the special favour of your kindness, I was permitted to celebrate the Holy Mysteries, I promised our Lord I would endeavour to write upon the love of His Divine Heart.

In the Introduction to this book, I could not refrain from mentioning how great was the happiness I owed to the permission, so graciously granted me, to visit the convent and the humble cell in which the faithful Spouse of the Heart of Jesus rendered her last sigh. Farther,

my Lord, in the course of the book I have ventured to quote some passages from your pastoral letter upon the *Communion of Reparation*, 1863.

These appear to me sufficient reasons for supplicating your Lordship to deign to accept the dedication of this Month of the Sacred Heart.

I hope, in a few days, to lay this little book at your feet, in proof of my profound respect.

I beg you to bestow your blessing upon it, my Lord, that it may do much good to souls; and bless also the poor author, who is happy in subscribing himself

Your Lordship's very humble and grateful
Servant in Jesus Christ,
A. LEFEBVRE, S.J.

Feb. 22, 1869.

REPLY.

REVEREND FATHER,

I thank you for having dedicated to me the book you have written, composed in honour of the Sacred Heart.

I can fully understand that your heart was deeply moved by the pilgrimage to Paray-le-Monial, and that it inspired you with the wish to speak to pious souls of that divine love which had been revealed to our Blessed Saint, in order that it might be better known and loved.

Have confidence, my dear Father, in my entire affection and esteem.

✠ FRED.,

Bishop of Autun, Chalon, and Mâcon.

Feb. 28, 1869.

NOTE.—Some months later, his Lordship deigned to send us the following approbation, which arrived too late to appear in the two first editions.

APPROBATION

OF THE RIGHT REVEREND

THE BISHOP OF AUTUN, CHALON, AND MACON.

REVEREND FATHER,

I have submitted the meditations written by you upon the Sacred Heart of Jesus to a pious and enlightened ecclesiastic. From the very favourable account he has given me of this work, I can have but one wish respecting it, viz. that it may be widely distributed amongst the faithful, who cannot read it without obtaining great increase of devotion towards the Adorable Heart of our Lord, or without feeling themselves stimulated to imitate those virtues of which this Divine Heart is the perfect model.

Receive, Reverend Father, with my thanks for this work, in which my diocese is specially concerned, the assurance of my affectionate regard.

✠ FRED.,

Bishop of Autun, Chalon, and Mâcon.

Autun, May 31, 1869.

TO THE

DIVINE HEART OF JESUS.

ADORABLE Heart of my Saviour, to Thee I consecrate this work. May every word in this book tend to Thy glory and love! Vouchsafe to speak to my heart, and grant me grace to do good to those souls so dear to Thee, those souls which cost Thee so much! I ask this, by the Immaculate Heart of Thy Mother, upon which Thou didst repose, and which best understood Thy infinite perfections, and the immense love that glowed in Thy Heart for us.

In the hope that Thou wilt not reject my humble prayer, permit me, O my Saviour and adorable Master, here to renew the vow made many years ago, and repeated a few days since, before Thy altar of Paray-le-Monial, and in those holy places where Thou didst reveal the riches, sorrows, and desires of Thy Heart. 'O my sweet Jesus, eternal Source of love, Father of mercies, and God of all consolation, who hast deigned to make known the ineffable treasures of Thy Heart to miserable and unworthy creatures, in grateful acknowledgment of so many benefits, and, above all, for the institution of the Holy Eucharist, to make reparation for the outrages of which I may be guilty, as well as those of other sinners against this mystery of Infinite Love, outrages which have often wounded Thy tender and loving Heart, I consecrate and devote myself wholly to this Divine Heart,

all that I am, and all the merits and graces I can ever possess in Thine eyes, and I promise to do my utmost to promote Thy glory.

'I take the Blessed Virgin Mary, Thy sweet Mother, to be my Mother. I make the same vow of entire consecration of my body and soul to her Immaculate Heart, and I undertake to do all in my power to extend and propagate devotion to her; above all, to the mystery of her Immaculate Conception, in accordance with the wish and intention of the Church.'

Vouchsafe, then, O my adorable Redeemer, to bless this my work. To Thee alone be all the glory and love, and to us the humiliation and shame! . . . This is the grace I ask and hope for, and I ask it again with my whole heart!

June 21, 1868,
Feast of St. Louis de Gonzaga.

INTRODUCTION.

THE idea of this book was first given to us whilst at Paray-le-Monial, that spot filled with sacred memories and living grace. . . . There we saw the altar whereon Jesus spoke, and revealed to His faithful Spouse, the Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque, the Angel of the Visitation, the riches and desires of His Heart. The body of this lowly religious reposes beneath the sacred tabernacle. . . . In the choir, to the left, and near the grille, we beheld the spot on which she stood, when Jesus said to her, *Behold this Heart, which has loved men so much!* . . . By signal favour of his Lordship, the Bishop of Autun, we were permitted to enter the convent, and to visit those holy places several times sanctified by the presence of Jesus. We traversed those corridors through which the Blessed Saint so often passed, we kissed the flag-stones her feet had touched when she received Holy Communion. . . . We trod the long paths in the garden filled with lilies, which lead to the mysterious chapel consecrated by her to the Heart of Jesus; and there we celebrated Holy

Mass. It was then we promised our dear Lord to attempt to write these pages upon His Adorable Heart.

Then, after a thanksgiving concluded but too soon, we were conducted to the grove of nut-trees, where Jesus Christ spoke of His sorrows to the Blessed Saint. Here a beautiful group recalls this event to the sisters in religion of Margaret Mary. . . . Two fine statues from Metz, which had arrived some weeks before the Novena, were to be blessed on that day. We were asked to perform the pious ceremony. . . . How touching was this sight! Upon a little mound of turf, covered with roses and lilies, Jesus, standing there, seemed as if come down from heaven! Upon His Heart He bears a crown of thorns; at His feet another crown has fallen—a crown of flowers, which His holy spouse refused to have. She is on her knees, upon the bare earth, gazing fixedly upon her Divine Master. She is veiled in white, being but a novice when she received this signal favour. Around this holy group, under the shade of these same hazel-trees, all the religious of the convent were ranged in silence.

Suddenly a hymn rose, sweetly chanted by pure and harmonious voices, in which the marvellous apparition was recalled, together with a prayer for the person who bestowed these statues upon the Community.

A few words upon the happiness which filled all hearts in that sanctuary preceded Benediction;

after which the song of thanksgiving, the *Magnificat*, was chanted by voices tremulous with emotion.

Yet more touching, if possible, were the details of the visit to the convent. There we were shown the little staircase, leading to a humble oratory, erected by the Blessed Saint to the Sacred Heart, the low beams of which were painted by herself or her novices. We looked into the little stable in which the ass belonging to the convent was kept, mentioned several times in the Life of the Saint, particularly in the account of the Vision in the nut-grove.

Farther on we crossed the court where Jesus descended, surrounded by Seraphim, and again condescended to speak to her of His Heart, which she then beheld *more brilliant than the sun.* A marble tablet commemorates this great and miraculous event.

We were then allowed to enter the little cell in the infirmary, where the Blessed Saint died. It has been altered into a chapel; and what riches of grace does it not contain! Not only are some of the sacred bones of the Saint to be seen, but also, enclosed in a beautiful reliquary, the relics of her clothing, her habit, her blessed veil, the instruments of her penances, and lastly, preserved within a small altar, in form like a tomb, are all her writings: glorious heritage of the Holy Family of the Visitation, sacred treasure from whence two precious volumes of documents were taken and

given to us. Their simplicity renders them, in our opinion, more interesting to the pious reader than all other accounts of the life of the Saint.*

Before leaving we were taken through the court-yard, in which is still to be seen the well mentioned in these documents. Here it was that one day, when drawing the water, the Blessed Margaret Mary broke several of her teeth. . . . Leaning over this well we gathered a few fern-leaves, which, joined with a small branch of hazel from the nut-grove, and some pansies from the garden, will always remind us of those holy places, and the sweetest emotions of grace we ever experienced.

When at length the time came for our departure, and the door of this blessed solitude closed, never again to be opened for us,—at least we dare not either hope or ask for so great a favour,—it was impossible for us to dissemble the impression we had received, or to hide our tears.

Thus it was at Paray-le-Monial, whither we had been summoned for the Novena in preparation for the Feast of the Sacred Heart, as may well be imagined, the most solemn of all feasts for this holy Community,—it was there we meditated on those thoughts that we have collected and arranged in this little book.

We divide this month, like that of St. Joseph, into three Novenas and a *triduum;* this gives a

* *Life and Works of the Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque.* 2 vols. 8vo. Paris, Poussielgue Frères, Rue Cassette; the Visitation, Paray-le-Monial.

pious reading and subject for prayer for every day in June.

The first Novena comprises a course of exercises or considerations upon the representation of the Sacred Heart. It seems to us that the more this touching symbol is contemplated the greater will be the hidden treasures and divine teachings discovered in it. We shall meditate, first of all, upon this adorable *Heart*, upon the *Cross*, the *Crown of Thorns*, the *Wound*, the *Blood*, and the *Flame;* in a word, upon all the attributes of this mysterious emblem. The second Novena will introduce us into the *Heart* of the Divine Saviour, teaching us the manner in which it is revealed to us. As the heart's life is hidden and interior, it requires means of communicating its thoughts, impressions, and sentiments : it has more than one language, for the heart expresses itself in *looks*, by *tears* and *sighs*, by *cries* and *transports;* but, above all, it is by *words* that it makes manifest its life to souls. By meditating upon these various forms of communication we shall learn to love Jesus, whose Heart has always been filled with love and mercy for us.

But as it is chiefly by acts of devotion and sacrifice that a heart makes itself known, we shall, in the third Novena, dwell on those mysteries in which this *Heart* has shown the greatest tenderness, and on the consideration of those titles which are fittest to awaken confidence in our souls, and

the love of those virtues of which this Divine Heart is the model.

We undertake this new work joyfully. We were asked, two years since, for a Month of the Sacred Heart. . . . We did not then dare to undertake it ; but at Paray every obstacle seemed removed, and we had the sustaining prayers of the pious convent. The sisters of the Blessed Margaret Mary promised to ask the grace of light to aid us, and we trust we have drawn some of that love from her glorious tomb which will suffice us on so grand a subject.

O sweet and amiable virgin, Margaret Mary ! Simple and modest flower, who hast adorned and embellished the delightful garden of the Visitation ! O precious pearl, celestial stone of the sacred treasure and rich heritage of the holy family of St. Francis of Sales and Jane de Chantal ! O dear and blessed sister, pray for me ! . . . O thou to whom Jesus revealed the ineffable riches of His Heart, and confided the most intimate secrets of His sorrows, His desires, and His love, obtain for me that I may speak with grace, that is to say, for the good of souls.

May some poor sinners who may read these pages return, and be converted to the true faith ! May tepid souls feel the glow of charity and fervour lighted in their souls ! And may all pure and faithful hearts find in them burning flames of love and zeal ! May all learn in these meditations to know and to love Jesus ! Amen.

MONTH

OF

THE SACRED HEART.

FIRST DAY.

THE HEART OF JESUS OFFERS TO US A TOUCHING MOTIVE TO MAKE US LOVE HIM, OUR GOOD MASTER.

'Dabo eis Cor, ut sciant me, et erunt mihi in populum, et ego ero eis in Deum: quia revertentur ad me in toto corde suo.'

'I will give them a Heart to know Me, and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, because they shall return to Me with their whole heart' (Jer. xxiv. 7).

THE last resource of a God who desired, above all things, to make men love Him was to give them His Heart; and it was during those times in which indifference most prevailed, that God resolved upon giving us this great proof of His love. But, alas, though He did this, there are yet thousands of souls everywhere,—and even in the land of France, graciously selected as it was, wherein to grant so great a favour to the world,—even there there are yet thousands of souls who are ignorant

of, or who have forgotten, this great benefit. These two thoughts comprise, so to say, all that we propose to meditate upon during this month of grace. They are inspired by the very words of Jesus Christ, when He revealed and gave His Heart to the Blessed Margaret Mary,—words which we shall very frequently have to repeat, and which will, I hope, inspire all who use this book with love for Jesus and His Sacred Heart: 'Behold,' He said, 'this Heart, which has loved men so much, and which receives but ingratitude from the greater number of them.' He loves; but is not loved in return, though He asks to be loved. The whole essence of the true devotion to the Sacred Heart consists, then, in loving and in making reparation; it is a worship of love and a worship of tears, and for this a God gives us His Heart. 'I will give them a Heart that they may know; I will give it to them, and they shall know.'

But to know a thing, it is necessary to learn and to study it; and therefore, for this reason, we will, in the first portion of this humble work, limit ourselves to consider this gift of God, this touching symbol of His love; in a word, the image of His Heart, as He has revealed it to us; a Heart surmounted by a Cross, surround with Thorns; a Heart wounded and on fire. These will form the subjects of our meditations during this first Novena: the Heart, the Cross, the Thorns, the Wound, the Blood, the Flames.

We begin, then, by contemplating His Heart.

'Behold it,' He says; and He gives it to us, as love has made it.

Jesus Christ gives us in the image of His Heart the most touching *motive* and the most perfect *model* of love: we shall consecrate the two first days of the month to this subject; so fertile in grave reflections, and so full of sweetness.

And first: Jesus has given us with His Heart the most touching motive of love. To understand this we must meditate on three things: I. What that is which Jesus Christ has actually given us. II. How He has given it to us. III. When it was that He gave us this benefit.

I. It was His Heart that Jesus gave us on that ever-memorable day, that day on which He said to her who may well be called the Angel of the Visitation, *Behold this Heart!* Yes, He did actually give it to us. But the heart is the entire man, the very source and principle of life, the treasure of the soul, or rather, its tabernacle. For God looks only at the heart; He asks only for the heart. *Intuetur cor*,—He beholdeth the heart. *Præbe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi*,—'My son, give Me thy heart' (Prov. xxiii. 26). It is there that all the powers of the human soul are concentrated; that all wishes, thoughts, hopes, tenderness, generosity, and self-devotion take their rise. The heart is the altar of sacrifice, in that sanctuary which alone is worthy of the Divinity.

But here we are speaking of the Heart of the Man-God; consequently there must be in it to the

highest degree the plenitude of all the divine perfections, with every grace and every virtue that the heart of man can ever possess. It is not possible to conceive any good quality of the human heart which the Heart of Jesus does not possess, and each perfection of man is enriched and dignified by the attributes of God.

Surely the consideration that this Heart which Jesus gives us is a Heart of flesh, a Heart like unto our own that which beats in our own breast, ought, more than any other, to touch our soul and inflame us with love for Jesus. *It is a memorial of the mystery of the Incarnation.* God has deigned to descend from heaven, and to become a man like unto us.

Is not this a mystery of love? Who would not love that Holy Child, seeing Him in the stable where He was born, and lying in that manger where His Heart had already begun to beat with love for us? From that day, when He became our brother to share our tears on earth, to be our companion in this our exile, until His death on Calvary, He, our God, will never cease to suffer for us; His Heart will beat for us alone!

He gives us, moreover, His living Heart, always full of tenderness and most devoted. With what gratitude ought we not to receive and guard this precious treasure! With what tears of devotion should we not honour His Heart! O ungrateful men! Is not the ingratitude of mankind, who, after having heard of this immense love, have yet

disregarded or forgotten so great a benefit, far greater than that of a disloyal subject or undutiful child, who, having received benefits from his king, or been tenderly cared for by his father, gave then neither of them a thought while living or a tear when dead? Strive to understand the merciful intention of your Saviour: He gives you His Heart that you may give Him yours, that men may know and that they may return to Him.

II. Consider how He has given you this Heart, and that He could not have chosen a more touching way of symbolising His tenderness. Silently contemplate the image before you—you will feel that the Sacred Heart is a Victim of love. We have already said that Jesus has given it to us such as love had made it, with the Cross, the Thorns, the Wound, and the Flames; those mysteries upon which in succession we propose to meditate during this Novena, and which we will endeavour to comprehend. They will remind us of the very excess of God's mercies; of God, who, to save us, was not content to suffer and die on the Cross, but who chose also to be crowned with thorns, and even after His death would have His Heart pierced by the cruel lance. It is, then, *a memorial of the mystery of Redemption*, that mystery of love without parallel; for this God delivered Himself up for sin, to save those poor sinners whom He loved to the end.

He gives us, then, this Heart, which has loved and suffered so much; He gives it, full of life,

with the attributes of His Passion, the Cross, and the Thorns, that our souls may be filled with gratitude. And here observe a great mystery. The flame which surrounds and burns this Heart, and seems to consume it before our eyes, touches not the Cross, nor can it even reach the thorns of that bloody crown. Do you understand the thought hidden beneath this symbol of love that He has given you? 'I will give them a heart, that they may understand.' He loves, and reminds you of all He has suffered. What do I say? He suffers, or would gladly suffer yet more for you, as He frequently said to His faithful spouse. And if you loved Him would you refuse to suffer for Him? Would you not rather begin to live for the love of that God who died for your salvation, and for love of you?

III. Perhaps the circumstances of the state of the world at that period of time when Jesus chose to give His Sacred Heart to the world may touch you yet more. We have already said that to give His Heart was a last resource, and, as it were, the only means left Him to make Himself loved. The Divine Redeemer chose to give us this grace at a time of great indifference, in an age of egotism and ingratitude.

Absorbed in the vile interests of the time, men had forgotten the destiny of their immortal souls; loving only the earth, they had become earthly, according to the celebrated words of St. Augustine: 'O man, given up to earthly things, thou

lovest the earth, thou art earth !' The enemies of God and of His Cross, strong in numbers and influence, had not only resolved to fix their aspirations and desires upon earthly things alone, but they continuously plotted against Jesus Christ, striving to destroy His throne and efface His name on earth ; they wished to crush and annihilate Him. And for this reason Jesus Christ, desiring to fight the world with new weapons, and to gain all hearts to His love, designed to reveal this last secret of His great mercy. In a word, He gave us His Heart that men might understand and return to Him.

We can here have no doubt respecting the thought and intention of our God ; for He condescended to explain it Himself with sufficient clearness on that ever-memorable day when, complaining of the indifference of the world, He said to His faithful spouse, the sainted virgin Margaret Mary : 'Behold this Heart that has so much loved men, and which receives only ingratitude from the greater number of them.' Was this not said in order that He might engage this ardent soul to make reparation for these outrages by a yet more tender and generous love? Doubtless ; and not alone to win this pure and faithful soul, but all those to whom He charged her to communicate the secrets of His love, and the munificent promises accompanying this first revelation.

Alas, there are many men, even to-day, who do not know that Jesus has revealed and given us

His Heart. Amongst all those to whom He has made this revelation, how many remain insensible to it, how many have forgotten this favour, how many still persist in denying it!

We cannot but think that this indifference and ingratitude of mankind is one of the most touching motives to lead us to respond to the designs of our Saviour, and to the chief desire of His Heart: first of all, to love Him, and then to make Him reparation for all these outrages. Believe and love, and you will console your God. Love Him for those who do not love Him, and give Him your heart entirely, without reservation or division. One single good Communion can make reparation for many lukewarm ones, and even for sacrilegious Communions. A soul which gives itself generously to Jesus can make reparation for the pain caused Him by cold hearts and ungrateful souls.

You may conclude this first exercise by a fervent prayer, either of consecration to the Heart of Jesus, or of reparation, or by both.

I specially recommend to you a prayer which appears to me the most beautiful of all, the prayer of the Blessed Margaret Mary. Jesus had just given her His Heart; it is not then surprising that she should have replied so lovingly in giving Him hers.

SECOND DAY.

THE HEART OF JESUS IS THE MOST PERFECT MODEL OF LOVE.

'Dabo eis Cor, . . et feriam eis pactum sempiternum, et non desinam eis benefacere.'

'I will give them a Heart. . . I will make an everlasting covenant with them, and will not cease to do them good' (Jer. xxxii. 40).

JESUS has given us His Heart, with the Cross, the Thorns, the Wound, and the Flames, in order that we might give Him ours, without reserve or division, and strive to love as He loves.

His Divine Heart is really the most perfect model of love for us, as we shall find in the second meditation.

Let us commence by a general consideration to which the pious reader will be ever ready to return, though it has been before pointed out.

The heart of man is the source of all good ; it is also the principle of evil, of good and evil thoughts, of virtues and vices. 'They come forth from the heart' (Matt. xv. 18). But the heart of a God is necessarily the most perfect of all hearts, the very temple and sanctuary of sanctity, the treasury of every virtue. The most sublime intelligences of heaven, the glorious Seraphin, the flaming Cherubin, are not able to look into the abyss of that divine ocean, nor fathom its depth, extent, or height. They contemplate it with ecstasy, and with eternal longings which never weary.

But inasmuch as the true measure of all holiness and perfection is love, and as divine charity is the rule of all that is good, does it not follow that love must dwell in the Heart of Jesus Christ; and must not this divine Heart be, as it were, the true focus of purest love? We will go, then, to this sanctuary to study and learn this love; and first we will admire those two centres of burning flames of charity, I mean the love for His eternal Father and the love for men, whom He condescends to call His brethren. This thought will form the subject of the two points of our exercise.

I. And first, consider the Heart of Jesus, model of love towards God. O the height! Contemplate this unfathomable abyss, this shoreless ocean, this illimitable sky, this boundless fire. Deep calls unto deep; plunge, then, into the immensity of these seas, mount to the heaven of heavens, cast yourself into these flames, lose yourself in this Heart, which has never had a single thought, movement, or sigh that was not for the love and glory of the Father. From the first instant of the Incarnation, that first breath of human life in God, until the last dying sigh, the Heart of Jesus Christ breathed only for this love and glory. It never had any other sentiment, thought, nourishment, or life. It is enough for the study of this subject to meditate on a word from that Heart, which reveals fully to us the secret of infinite love: 'For I do always the things that please Him' (John viii. 29).

To think, to labour, to suffer, does not this constitute the entire life of loving hearts? Is it not the most beautiful proof of love? Is it, indeed, possible to love without all this? St. Ambrose says that it is not; for he who loves much thinks with delight, works with ardour, suffers with joy. Now penetrate into this sanctuary of the Heart of Jesus. Once more He thinks only of His Father, to whom He is united by those incessant thoughts of love which even sleep could not interrupt. During the silence of night He continued His most sublime prayers (Luke vi. 12); and even when the Man-God slept, the Heart of the God-Man watched, and was engaged in a sweet prayer of love. 'I sleep, and My Heart watcheth' (Cant. v. 2). Thus much for the life of thought in this Heart. In its life of action, the Heart of Jesus makes known its love in a yet more surprising manner. What sentiments and desires for the glory of God are manifested during all those years spent in solitude, and hidden in the obscure workshop of Nazareth? Let us repeat those words which comprise and describe His whole life: 'I do always those things that please Him.' Later on, we find Him speaking only of His Father's kingdom, working to extend His empire, and conquering hearts by His wondrous miracles; zealous only to avenge God's glory. Let us recall a single instance of this zeal in that holy wrath with which Jesus drove from the Temple those who were profaning it by unworthy traffic, and had made the house of

prayer a den of thieves. What love and what zeal in this life of labour and sacrifice !

But it is above all in the sorrows of the Passion, and in the sufferings of death, that the Heart of Jesus proves His love for His Father. If it is true that to love is to suffer, it is also true that the greater the love the stronger is the wish and the love of suffering. This is a fixed law, admirably interpreted by St. Augustine. The Heart of Jesus alone has perfectly understood and accomplished this law.

He suffered with an infinite love even unto death on the Cross; yes, and beyond death itself, for He chose to be wounded even after having rendered up His last sigh into the hands of His Father. He had said that there is no greater proof of love than to give up life for a friend; but He did yet more than this, and loved beyond death itself.

Study this model; enter into this Divine Heart, that you may draw thence sentiments of true love to God; and seeing how few there are who really love Him, strive to make reparation for these ingratitudes, and to console your Divine Saviour. Alas, in the world He is forgotten; nothing is done for love of Him; there is a horror of all suffering, a horror of the Cross. He is not loved; hearts are drawn by another weight. In the celebrated words of St. Augustine, this law of love, this mystery of the attraction of souls, is revealed. What is the weight by which the thoughts and sentiments of

all hearts are drawn at this day? What is the life and what the affections of these hearts?

Do we not see that they are far from God, precipitating themselves into lying vanities, into the very mud of the vilest interests of this world, with its unworthy pleasures, whilst God, the true centre of all good, and of life itself, is not loved. Strive then, Christian soul, heart beloved of Jesus, O you to whom He complains and gives Himself,—strive to make men understand the wishes of His Heart, respond to His desires, and imitate His love of God, for He is your Father also.

II. The Heart of Jesus is our model of the perfect love that we owe our neighbour. This is the second precept, making but one with the first; and the two comprise the whole law of God, the law of love. 'Thou shalt love.' Sublime law given by the Heart of God to the heart of men. Jesus, who came to fulfil this sacred law, has given us most touching proofs of perfect charity; the study of His Divine Heart will ever recall these great lessons to our minds. As we shall speak more than once of the goodness of Jesus towards men, we will to-day only point out the chief characteristics of this love. It is impossible not to recognise the Heart of a God; and as soon as we know this God, we must begin to love Him.

The love of Jesus for us is the most tender and faithful, the most sincere and ingenious; the most disinterested and generous love.

The remembrance of the mysteries of His life

and death will be sufficient to enable us to understand the truth of this statement, and to discern all the qualities of this divine love. I will therefore merely quote here a few texts from Holy Scripture, which will help us to make a practical study of the life of our Divine Saviour: 'I have loved you,' He says by His prophet, 'from all eternity' (Jer. xxxi. 3). His beloved Apostle says that He loved His brethren to the end, or rather infinitely (John xiii. 1). But how did He prove His tenderness for us? By giving and delivering Himself up to death for us (Galat. ii. 20). And above all by remaining with us even to the consummation of ages (Matt. xxviii. 20). Here, then, we see that love is the beginning and end of the sacrifice, and the Heart of Jesus is a victim of love.

Can we now dare to say that we love our brethren? Ah, woe, woe, to the world! Charity appears to be utterly banished from it; a mortal chill, a fatal egotism has seized upon all hearts. The golden chain, as St. Augustine terms that bond of charity by which souls are united, is broken, and even in the bosom of families its links have fallen asunder. The brother passes on, unmindful of his brother's fall; even the child loses confidence in the mother, and loves the father no longer!

'I will give them a Heart.' In concluding this meditation I again quote this text, in the hope of perhaps touching some poor sinner, and of convincing him of the guilt and unhappiness of

not loving God. Whoever you are, Jesus Christ gives you His Heart. Unbelievers, cease to discuss and to reason ; He loves you and gives you His Heart ! Impious enemies of God, why these struggles against Heaven, these blasphemies against your Saviour, this hatred of Jesus Christ ? Ah, cease ; He gives you His Heart, He loves you ! And you, with hearts cold and indifferent, dead and insensible, will you yet continue this earthly and material life ? He loves you, He gives you His Heart ! And lastly, ye tepid and languid souls, can you still resist His love ? He also gives you His Heart, and He loves you ! Ah, believe how odious such ingratitude and coldness must be. Jesus says to you, ' I give you My Heart ;' and can you refuse to give Him yours ? He says, ' I give you My whole Heart !' and can you reply that you neither could nor would give Him yours entirely, but only a share of it ? I beseech you to pray that you may understand ; so that, touched and vanquished by love, you may give your all to Him who gives Himself wholly to you, and have no other wish than to live and die for His glory and love.

You will conclude this exercise by the consecration of yourself to the Heart of Jesus.

THIRD DAY.

THE CROSS OF THE HEART OF JESUS.

First Attribute.

'Proposito sibi gaudio sustinuit crucem.'
'Having joy set before Him, He endured the Cross' (Heb. xii. 2).

In our contemplation of the Heart of Jesus, that touching symbol of His love, we shall now meditate upon its attributes; for they all contain a divine thought, conveying to our minds most important instruction.

The first thing that strikes us as we look upon this holy picture is the Cross surmounting the Sacred Heart, and this Cross will teach us things infinitely precious for our salvation and perfection; it will show us what sin is, and what is the value of a soul. These two thoughts will form the subject of two profitable meditations, if we study with the light of faith.

We shall now consider what this Cross of the Heart teaches us with regard to sin. It teaches us, first, to avoid sin, and, secondly, to make reparation for it. We speak here of mortal sin; the thorns which tear the Heart of Jesus Christ will soon teach us to avoid even venial sins.

I. But in what way does the Cross help us to avoid sin? Do you not yet see? It teaches you that sin is the sole evil, the supreme evil, for the Heart of God and the heart of man.

1. Yes, an evil for the Heart of God. We read in Holy Scripture that sin amazes, afflicts, wounds, and irritates it. This Divine Heart, having loved men so much, and loaded them with benefits, was, so to speak, unable to believe in such an amount of ingratitude. 'Is it possible?' the Lord exclaims, with sorrowful surprise. 'I will go down and see' (Gen. xviii. 21). He beheld, and penetrated with grief to the depths of His Heart, He even repents Him of havingcreated such profoundly ungrateful beings (Gen. vi. 6). No more forcible language could have been used to reveal the sentiments of the Divine Heart. With what an immense sorrow and bitterness it must have been filled to have exhaled this regret! 'It repents Me to have made them!'

But to this profound sorrow, just wrath soon follows. If God could not look upon the ingratitude of sinners, still less could He suffer such outrage and contempt. 'I will exterminate them,' He said; 'not one shall be left on the face of the earth' (Gen. vi. 7). Opening the fountains of heaven, He purified the world in the abyss of waters, and all perished therein, one family alone excepted. Later on, we find five guilty cities destroyed by avenging fires.

I ask if God could reveal to us in stronger language, or by more imposing facts, how greatly His Heart is wounded and irritated by sin? Ah, yes, we read in the book of eternal verities something yet more surprising. The Apostle St. Paul makes

known to us this mystery of sorrow and death. Sin renews in our hearts the crucifixion of a God, even to putting Him to death on the Cross (Heb. vi. 6). 'Ungrateful ones,' said he, 'they have crucified anew the Son of God in their hearts.' Do you now begin to understand? He gives you His Heart, with the Cross, that you may understand what sin is—that sin which caused the death of a God upon that same Cross. Ah, unhappy one, recall now to your mind the greatest sin of your life, and with your hand upon your heart, behold, and look upon this mysterious Cross, for it was you who caused Jesus to die upon it! Listen to the Saviour God; He speaks as on the Cross at Calvary: 'Father, forgive him; for he knew not what he did.' You will ask His forgiveness with tears, and promise to offend Him no more, nor put Him to death again in your heart. These are the great truths of which we are reminded by the Cross we see planted in the Heart of Jesus. Will not the remembrance of this Cross keep us from giving way to temptation, and cause us to avoid the evil of sin? Yea, rather let me suffer everything, O my God, than renew Thy sufferings! Rather let me die than crucify Thee again in my heart!

2. There is another consideration very powerful to a serious and reflective mind; it is that sin, which is the sole evil for the Heart of God, is also the sovereign evil for the heart of man, which it troubles and disturbs by the remorse of shame

and grief, blinding, enchaining, enslaving, and finally destroying it. These are mysteries indeed, but also great and eternal verities. The Holy Spirit has revealed to us all the ravages of sin in our souls. Reason and experience demonstrate and confirm the reality of all these evils. Yes, God has arrows, sharp arrows, which He casts into the ungrateful and guilty heart ; He has a sword, a glittering sword, which He plunges into the criminal soul ; it is the remorse of shame and sorrow which strikes as soon as the sin is committed. Think on this wound, this worst and incurable wound.

The light of the soul is quenched, the eye of the heart is darkened. Not only the light of heaven or faith, but even that of the mind, the flame of intellect ; even the pagans themselves have acknowledged that the passions of the heart extinguish all elevated thought and noble sentiment.

Nay, further, even the very liberty of the human soul is lost by sin; liberty, that surpassing and essential gift, which God so respects that He does not take men's hearts, but asks them to give them to Him ; He knocks at the door, He does not break through it. Even this liberty is lost, when the soul allows herself to be enslaved by sin, to be enchained and ruled by passion. 'Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin' (John viii. 34). St. Augustine strove for many years to break the iron chain that bound him. A miracle of divine mercy was necessary to deliver him. Confess, poor sinner,

that this is true of yourself: you are a slave; you have often said so; you cannot help it, it is stronger than you. Sin can even destroy and utterly annihilate the heart. There are many men who have no heart. It is at once the greatest mystery and the saddest truth. Such souls as these feel nothing, they no longer love anything; all is quenched and destroyed by sin. We see children without love for their mothers, and mothers who do not love their children. How often have we been told this with tears! We have proofs of these frightful ravages in Holy Scripture; the Holy Spirit says there are men whose heart is become like ashes and an unclean dust (Wisd. xv. 10). There are men whose heart is without pity, insensible, like the heart of a beast (Dan. iv. 13). Others there are again whose heart has been utterly destroyed by passion; of these there are two especially destructive, impurity and intemperance. 'Fornication and wine take away the heart' (Osee iv. 11).

The Cross of the Heart of Jesus will recall these great and terrible verities to our minds all the more luminously, in that our Lord, in His merciful designs, also places a cross in the guilty hearts of His children. He has saved many by the sorrows of this life, and He recalls these prodigals to His love by the path of tears. O you, then, who suffer, see if sin be not the first cause of so much suffering, and if it be not the very source of your miseries: hasten to return to the Lord, and He will have

pity upon you. He ceased not to love you even when you offended Him; what will He not do when He sees you return to His Heart?

II. The Cross will not only teach us to avoid sin, and come out of it, but it will also teach us how we ought, and may, make reparation for it. On this important subject I will say but a word, lest I exceed the limits of our exercise. The reading for each day should not take more than a quarter of an hour, and half an hour for those who make it a subject of meditation.

The Cross of the Heart of Jesus reveals a two-fold mystery to sinful man—a mystery of justice and a mystery of mercy. The Cross teaches us how we may appease one, and merit the other. This is, then, the thought for the second point of this important consideration, and it is perhaps as necessary to develop it, as we did the first point; but besides its being too long, it seems to us that the pious reader will find it easy to reflect upon it, and the contemplation of the Cross will give light. He will readily see that if divine justice and mercy met and embraced at Calvary, at the foot of the Cross, it was because a Victim was there who had made reparation for all by His sufferings, and had effaced our crimes in His tears and blood.

Now this is precisely the condition of God's forgiveness: first, tears, that is to say, sorrow, which is repentance; then blood, which is penitence or sacrifice. But in order to enter upon this road with courage and confidence, we must

look on the Cross of the Heart of Jesus—that meek Lamb who bore the sins of the world, and was immolated for us ; we will unite our sufferings to His, our tears to His blood, and our death to His.

Take courage and confidence, poor sinners. If you suffer, think it a proof of His divine goodness and mercy : 'Return, ye transgressors, to the Heart' (Isaias xlvi. 8). Go to the Heart of Jesus, and remember that, by His example, you can expiate and merit ; you, who are guilty, can expiate a whole life of ingratitude, and merit, through divine mercy, not only the forgiveness of all your faults, but even an eternity of glory. You will conclude this exercise by a prayer to the Cross of the Heart of Jesus. You will adore this Cross, preëminently the true Cross ; and you will endeavour to console the Divine Master. You will then make an act of contrition, inspired by the tenderest love.

You, all ye just ones, if you suffer, let it be like Jesus, with sentiments of love and zeal, to make reparation and expiation for sins—to obtain pardon for poor sinners. Love and embrace your Cross, for it is beautiful and good : 'They are all golden,' said the amiable St. Francis of Sales ; 'yes, all of them, but especially those of the Heart.'

And you, poor sinners, when you suffer—and if God still loves you, He will not fail to send you sufferings—He will knock at the door of your heart with a Cross. Still have confidence ; and far from

murmuring, or pitying yourself, accept such trials with gratitude, suffer with love; and not only shall you obtain pardon, but you shall be consoled with hope, and strengthened by victory.

'Hail, Cross, thou only hope of man!
To saints increase the grace they have;
From sinners purge their guilt away.'

FOURTH DAY.

THE CROSS OF THE HEART OF JESUS.

First Attribute (*continuation*).

THE Cross of the Heart of Jesus will not only teach us to avoid sin, and make reparation for it, but will also teach us what a soul is, how we should labour for the salvation of our soul, and how we can lose it, for the love of God; *lose it* in the sense of the words of the Gospel, that is to say, by abnegation, by really dying to ourselves, that we may live to Jesus Christ, and be crucified with Him to the world and all its vanities.

I. And, first, the sight of this Cross will teach us to save our soul; for the Cross alone can reveal to us its value and its price. It tells us, in fact, that a God so esteemed and loved souls, that in order to ransom them He did not fear to die upon that cruel Cross, to die in all the horrors of that agony. 'Soul, thou hast cost all this!' cries

out St. Augustine. Behold, then, the price of one soul—behold how much it has cost: the tears and blood, the life and death of a God! This great God holds in His hand the scales of the eternal sanctuary, and He has placed on one side of this balance His life, His death, His tears, and blood. So much; and on the other, your soul; this is the price that it cost. Tell me now if you understand why He gives you His Heart with that Cross. 'That they may understand.'

Do not therefore ask the world what is the price of a soul, or what it is worth, for the world has not an idea about it. There are foolish men who are always ready to sell their souls, and at what a price, O my God! It should be told with tears of blood; but so often is this abominable merchandise seen, that it causes surprise no longer. I have sometimes been a witness of these shameful transactions, and have heard it said on a Saturday, by those who deceive poor workmen, 'You will come to work to-morrow, will you not, my friends? You will get fifty centimes extra for that day;' and they have eagerly replied, 'Yes, yes, we will!' And for what were these fifty centimes? Alas, to induce these men, with the sweat of their brow, and the labour of their hands, to sell their souls on that day. Fifty centimes! For so much! O misery, O shame! and others sell their souls for a vile pleasure, for a little mud!

Do not, then, ask the world the price of a soul; rather ask of Heaven, whence this pre-

cious stone has fallen. Ask God Himself, who has created souls,—God, who has redeemed them, and those angels whose charge it is to guard these treasures. Inquire of Heaven, for Heaven alone can tell you the value of a soul. Suppose that you should see, sparkling on the finger of a very rich man, a diamond of the purest water; and not knowing the value of such a marvellous gem, would wish to know what it had cost. What would you do? Certainly you would not ask a person as poor as yourself, who could give you no information; you would rather ask him who made this wondrous ring, or the owner of it, who would reply, 'It is worth so much; it cost so much.'

Probably the price of that gem would be sufficient for the support of a hundred families for a year. Yes, it is worth much. Ask of the Cross, of that God who died upon it, what is the value of your soul. So much, O my soul; thou costest so much! Yes, the blood and tears, the life and death, of Jesus Christ. It cost as much as that; that was indeed the price!

Here you will retire into yourself. What do you think now concerning your soul, which cost God so much? What have you done for your soul up to this day, and what will you do henceforward? Even among Christians there are many men who give themselves no trouble about their souls, and who are ready to sell them for nothing. They are preoccupied about their lives, their health; the

slightest indisposition troubles them; they hasten to consult men of science, who, notwithstanding all their laborious studies, know so little, and can do so little, in spite of all their efforts; whilst, if the soul is ill or wounded, they think nothing of it; even when it is nearly dead in sin, they do not trouble to seek a priest, who has grace and power to heal these maladies, and can save it from the danger of eternal death. Numbers are daily lost through this terrible indifference. Can there be a more frightful misfortune, a more odious crime?

But if you consult the Cross, you will always avoid this; and the more you meditate on this adorable mystery, the mystery of the Cross, the more will you hear the voice from Calvary, and the farther will you advance in the true science of salvation, and become more perfect in the sight of God. For the Cross of Jesus, and above all the Cross of His Heart, will soon teach you the sublimest secrets of holiness; it will lead you into the way of sacrifice, and, dying to yourself, make you live by His love. This, then, is the thought of the second point in our meditation.

II. It is true, then, that there is nothing in religion more powerful and efficacious than the Cross of the Heart of Jesus to teach us how to *lose* our soul, in the Gospel sense of the word, which means to strip us of ourselves, to renounce ourselves, even to die to ourselves, that we may live to God, live with Jesus, crucified to the world, and buried with Him in the tomb.

Here I shall begin to speak a new language, which will appear mystical to more than one of my readers; for I wish to speak of sanctity to saints, and of perfection to the perfect; and when could I ever thus speak, except in a book specially dedicated to the children of God, even to the disciples and spouses of Jesus Christ?

It is the Cross that reveals to us the secrets of this life and the happiness of this death. The Cross! It is preëminently the book of God's elect, the light of their intelligence, the joy of these heavenly souls. There is nothing sweeter than this life of sacrifices, nothing more glorious than this dying to one's self for the love of Jesus.

But take care: if this life of sacrifice is to be truly happy, the sacrifice must be entire; there must be no thefts from this altar, no reservation or division in the holocaust of the heart. In carrying the Cross and following Jesus, the self-renunciation must be entire, like unto Himself, and for love of Him. On the contrary, nothing is more sad than the life of a divided heart, because a jealous God cannot give it the peace and joy of His holy and divine Spirit. Then refuse Him nothing; He must *live* and *reign* in your heart.

In order that this death should be sweet and glorious, you must die entirely to yourself and to the world. For if you retain any movement of this terrestrial life, any breath of this mundane life, not only will Jesus not live and reign in you, but

He will soon withdraw, and leave you alone in the night of this sad tomb.

You will better understand this language by a simple comparison drawn from the subject of our meditation. You know that formerly victims were immolated on the altar of the true God; this was a homage of adoration reserved for the All-Powerful, the Creator and Master of life. Sometimes it was a heifer, at others a spotless lamb or a mild dove. The flesh and bones of the victim were burned and wholly consumed in the sacred fire for a holocaust, so that absolutely nothing remained. When the priest, with a firm and sure hand, plunged the knife into the very heart of the victim, it fell instantly dead at the foot of the altar, and, without suffering pain, glorified God. When, on the contrary, the priest, with a timid and uncertain hand, only wounded the poor victim, what happened then? The bleeding heifer or bull fled, lowing, far from the sacred building; the lamb or the plaintive dove would die far from the sanctuary, after many hours of cruel suffering. Such is the destiny of those souls called by Heaven to sacrifice, and who are invited by Jesus to this immolation. If they truly die to themselves and the world, if the sacrifice is entire, and the holocaust perfect, then they often do not feel the wound or the flame, and God fills them with His purest delights at the hour of their holy and precious death. Blessed dead!

Let it be well understood that herein rests all the

secret of this perfect life, of this blessed death. The soul that is faithful to the law of love, possesses peace ; but if she is generous to the sacrifice of the Cross, if the soul dies well, then it enters at once into the joy of her Lord. A thousand times happier is the soul in the tomb with Jesus Christ the Saviour than all the sinners in the very intoxication of their vain pleasures.

Thus, lost in love, lived and died the most holy spouses of Jesus—Teresa, Magdalen of Pazzi, Catherine, and the sweet virgin of the Visitation, whom God so loved that He gave her His Heart, the Blessed Margaret Mary ; they had no other happiness than to suffer, no other life than to die for the love of their Saviour. Thus, even in the world, sometimes live and die, faithful and ardent souls, known only to God, but whom He fills with light and consolation. But, O my God, how rare are these generous souls ! how few those hearts who love the Cross ! how few the victims consumed in holocaust !

Jesus ceases not to complain to those He loves, and He wishes us to console His Heart. You will therefore terminate this exercise by a fervent prayer ; you will give yourselves to Him by an act of love ; you will make honourable amends to repair the outrages of so many unfaithful and ungrateful souls ; and soon, touched and animated by a sentiment of zeal for His glory, you will no longer be satisfied with the wish and the firm will to work out your own salvation, and to suffer

everything, even to die a thousand times rather than lose your soul, but you will ask Him for souls, for many souls. You will entreat Him to cast the sacred fire of His love into all hearts. 'Give me souls' (Gen. xiv. 21). O Lord Jesus, O my God, who so lovest souls, save them; and grant me grace to work, to combat, to suffer, even to die with Thee, for the salvation of many—give me souls!

FIFTH DAY.

THE CROWN OF THORNS REVEALS TO US THE EVIL OF VENIAL SIN.

Second Attribute.

'Plectentes coronam de spinis, posuerunt super caput ejus.'

'And platting a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head' (Matt. xxvii. 29).

THE crowning with thorns was one of the most cruel sufferings and bloody outrages endured by Jesus Christ on the day of His dolours and death. Both blood and tears were in the eyes of that meek Saviour when, with a reed in His hand, He silently and lovingly gazed on the soldiers and executioners, who, as they passed, bent the knee before Him, saying insultingly, 'Hail, King of the Jews!'

But a crown of thorns around a heart! Can we conceive greater suffering, and what means

this mystery of pain and love? I will give them a Heart to know Me. Let us repeat this touching text: 'I will give them a Heart, My Heart, and they shall understand.' We have already learned from the Cross of this Divine Heart what mortal sin is; the thorns of this crown are a figure of venial sin, those slight and numerous faults for which idle and cowardly souls forgive themselves, alas, but too readily, for they wound and tear the Heart of Jesus.

This is, doubtless, a most important and necessary subject for those who will some day read this book. The habit of small faults is an immense danger, and causes the death of souls by that sad slow malady called tepidity, which is a most difficult subject to treat of. I tremble to say too much, lest any faithful, and at the same time fearful, souls, who may apply these words to themselves, should be alarmed or discouraged; but far more do I fear saying too little on this subject, and so leaving many others to sleep in death.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, thou hast promised to heal all hearts, even those that are tepid and lukewarm; be Thou our strength and light; we can never have greater need of thy grace, never have we more confidently invoked it! We shall, then, I. Examine the signs or symptoms of this malady. II. Study its character or nature. III. Point out the remedies.

I. A few words will suffice to enlighten the well-disposed soul; for there are certain signs by which

the malady and its dangers are made evident; thus, the habit one has of committing venial sins; the frequency of these slight faults, and above all an habitual contempt of little things—I mean small graces, or rather, small infidelities; habitual negligence in all that concerns the service of God, such as prayer and receiving the Sacraments; disgust, *ennui*, and routine in pious exercises; and above all when there is scarcely any resistance or struggle before committing a fault, and but little remorse or repentance afterwards. All these are alarming symptoms, and may well cause you to fear. If you are not already struck with this malady, you are certainly threatened with it; already have you plunged many of these thorns into the Heart of your God; you have wounded Him by all these infidelities.

But there is no thorn that tears this Heart more cruelly than a divided soul, which gives itself but partially, fighting continually against His love, refusing Him almost every sacrifice. As if it were possible to reconcile the Gospel with the world, or to mingle heaven and earth! Jesus could not endure a soul in such a state, and would not remain with it; it would disgust Him; He would soon reject it, and cast it out of His Heart. And mark this well: the more the graces received, the more alarming are the symptoms, and the more is death to be feared. Yet, again, do you understand what it is that makes this state so sad, and the contrast between the two hearts so horrible? The one burns

with love, devoured by the flames of the most ardent charity ; the other is tepid and languid, what do I say ? it is cold, and will soon be frozen in death ! Dead from the very heart !

II. Let us now study the characteristics of this sad malady, and at once declare it to be, not only a condition of pain, but replete with danger.

These divided souls and weak hearts generally suffer much ; for God is not pleased, nor can He be ; then He complains, He often threatens, and sometimes strikes. *He complains ;* and thenceforward there is not the same confiding intercourse. He is resisted, and can no longer give His peace. Who that resists Him can have peace ? The soul withdraws from Him, and then His light becomes less, and finally disappears. *He threatens :* I will place, He says, thorns in all his paths ; the malediction of the Lord is ready to fall upon him who fights his battles with cowardice, and who negligently performs the Lord's work. 'Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully' (Jer. xlviii. 10). At last *He strikes*, and sometimes with heavy blows of justice ; He makes His thunderbolts fall upon these ungrateful children to rouse them from their sleep of death, unless some day, fully disgusted, He holds His peace, and flees away, which is incomparably more fatal for the soul, which is thus left to die. All these, and the following verities, are of faith, reason, and experience. God has said, and you also know, dear reader, that you have never been really happy

in the service of God, except when you have been faithful and generous.

But it is time for us to enter upon the terrors of this subject, and to speak of the dangerous character of this sad malady of tepidity, which infallibly leads to the death of souls—yes, infallibly; but—and this is what appears to me so terrifying—it leads the soul very gently on to this fatal termination: *Paulatim*, by little and little, says the Holy Spirit, and so imperceptibly that a soul may be really dead, and yet preserve the appearance of life. Three kinds of paths or descents lead to this abyss, all so rapid and imperceptible, that the progress, or rather the fall, is scarcely observed. This explanation is necessary for the comprehension of two sentences which seem to contradict each other. God says, they shall fall little by little, very gently: 'He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little' (Eccles. xix. 1). St. Bernard says, 'They begin by small things, trifling faults, and soon are carried away, are precipitated into great ones, and then into crime, because the descent is gentle and rapid at the same time.'

The *path of illusion* is one of the ways by which the soul goes to its death. Self-deception is so easy. What! when even the science of theology is not always sufficient for a priest to be able to pronounce whether the sin of which you accuse yourself is mortal or venial; and yet you do not fear to decide in your own favour! Neverthe-

less there is not a great distance between a thought negligently resisted and the commencement of complaisance, or even of guilty desire; not so great a distance as you may imagine between a look of imprudent curiosity and one of impurity. 'Fear then: thou hast the name of being alive, and thou art dead' (Apoc. iii. 1). Yes, perhaps even now you are dead, and at the bottom of the abyss!

Another path is that by which the soul is *drawn away*. This fatal habit of easy indifference, this life of self-indulgence and concession, ends by overcoming the will. There is first a force which lessens the attraction to what is good, and an influence augmenting the attraction of evil; then a day comes when the measure of evil is full, and the soul is crushed under the weight of a thousand trifling faults, which, though considered to be but trifles, are sufficient by their frightful accumulation to destroy its life; there is no courage to resist the supreme effort of the perfidious enemy, who only waited for this day and hour to give battle and to triumph. You will understand I do not not say that venial sins will in the end become mortal; ordinarily this would not be true, though it is certain that in matters of justice they might in some cases impose an obligation *sub gravi*, and form a grave matter or crime, and consequently a mortal sin. I mean merely to say that generally the soul enchained by the force of habit finds itself gently, but surely, conducted by this *path*

of attraction to death—that is to say, to mortal sin. Finally, there is the road of divine justice or *chastisement.* Wounded and outraged by all these resistances to grace, wounded and outraged in His love by all these infidelities and faults, God is at last exhausted, even His Heart is filled with disgust. At first He is silent; He withdraws Himself, He abandons and even curses this soul; and then—the terrible word must be said—He rejects, and finally vomits it: 'Because thou art lukewarm, I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth' (Apoc. iii. 16). O misery! Destiny a thousand times more sad in one sense than that of the sinner! Jesus wishes not for his death, but that he might return to life. Comprehend, then, my dear reader, the difference. If you are a sinner, Jesus Christ pities you; He opens His Heart to you, and will shed tears of compassion over you, and the treasure of His merciful pity. Weep, and He will pardon you; but if you continue tepid, He cannot endure you; you disgust Him; He will vomit you forth out of His mouth. 'I will begin to vomit thee;' and perhaps this has already begun. 'I would thou wert cold or hot. But because thou art lukewarm, I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth' (Apoc. iii. 16).

To vomit! This is the terrible word which I cannot write without trembling, and which I had even rather not attempt to explain here, for fear of plunging some soul into despair. I will, then, merely ask *when* and *how* Jesus Christ could

return, and take back this soul which He had once vomited forth with disgust? I wish to know it there is anything by which the soul can be roused from this death-sleep or restored to life. Would good reading effect this? We know that many sinners have been converted by reading good books—St. Augustine, Ignatius Loyola, and many others we could name; but have you ever seen or heard of this effect upon a tepid soul? Would confession be likely to rouse it? Alas, a tepid soul prepares itself without care, and approaches this Sacrament unconcernedly, not even understanding what the priest says! Would Holy Communion effect it? On the contrary, most certainly a tepid Communion would consummate the evil, and the soul would sink into an abyss of sin and death. Would, then, the Holy Scriptures, which are searching, efficacious, and penetrating, and by which God has often worked wonders, be the means of restoring this soul to life? Alas, it is rarely, indeed, that lukewarm souls are touched by the Holy Word, for they have ears and hear not.

It may be truly said that nothing can arrest them when once they begin to descend into the abyss; nothing can raise them when once they have fallen; nothing restore them to life when they are dead. 'I would thou wert cold!'

Yet, further, mark the difference. I will suppose a fervent soul finds itself a prey to sudden and horrible temptation. If it yields and begins

to fall, it is alarmed, and immediately asks whither it is going, and prays its guardian angel to arrest and protect it. Startled and aroused even by the shock of its fall, it sorrowfully asks where it is, and cries from the bottom of the abyss to God to have pity. 'Out of the depths have I called to Thee, O Lord.' But the tepid soul, on the contrary, which gradually, imperceptibly descends, never stops to inquire whither it is going, or where it is. The barren tree is fallen, is dead! Is there not every reason to fear that as it falls, so it will lie? But enough, O my God; perhaps even too much for more than one soul; and how do I tremble lest in these words I may have written my own sentence! Let us, then, hasten to say there is yet a remedy, and that we must never cease to hope.

III. Yes, you can be healed, if you wish, and I am about to point out two remedies, which are as infallible as they appear mild and easy. Do you really wish for them? Will you be made whole?

The first, then, is prayer; above all, prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He has promised to save and heal all who invoke Him with confidence, even tepid souls: a spark of love, or a tear shed over you, will recall you to life. Say to Him, then, 'O my Jesus, he whom Thou lovest is sick' (John xi. 3); 'O my God, I die!' and He will have pity on you, and will restore you the strength and joy of the years of your first fervour. Have confidence; cast yourself into this Divine Heart.

The second remedy is even more simple, easy, and prompt: it is action, or sacrifice. You will try to conquer yourself, and will at once commence by a little sacrifice. You will gain a victory over yourself by restraining your lips even from one useless word, or by repressing the idle curiosity of a look in walking in the streets or in the church. You will make this sacrifice to-day in honour of the Heart of Jesus, and He will recompense you by the peace and joy of His love. To-morrow offer Him two sacrifices, two equally easy victories; then three, and four. Thus you will go on for several days, and there will be a proportionate increase of peace, love, and joy in your hearts. I assure you that not only will you be healed, but you will live joyfully for His glory, and you will live to die no more. Thus each day you will remove some of those thorns which wound His Heart, and this grateful and faithful God will daily bestow upon you a more abundant portion of life and grace. 'That they may have it more abundantly' (John x. 10).

SIXTH DAY.

THE WOUND OF THE HEART, SOURCE OF GRACE AND MERCY.

Third Attribute.

'Unus militum latus ejus aperuit.'

'One of the soldiers opened the side of Jesus' (John xix. 34).

Do you see that large deep wound beneath the crown of thorns which encircles and tears the Heart of Jesus? Drops of blood incessantly flow from it; a vivid and brilliant flame bursts forth from it. This wound will form the subject of our meditation to-day.

Two principal thoughts should here occupy the attention of the faithful soul: first, the contemplation of the real external wound of the Adorable Heart; and secondly, the remembrance of its interior and hidden wounds, which were still more deep and painful; for, says St. Bernard, 'He was wounded by the lance that we might see the invisible wound of His love by means of the visible wound; the wound made in His sacred flesh shows us the wound in His soul.'

First Point: The Exterior and Visible Wound.—This was given on Calvary. You will meditate upon the circumstances of this narrative so full of mysteries, and you will find this contemplation one of the sweetest and holiest of this month.

Jesus had been dead for some hours. The crowd had descended the mountain in silence.

Some of the executioners, struck by the prodigies they had witnessed in the sky, returned, saying, 'This Jesus who died on the Cross was truly God.' Mary, the Mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalen, and St. John, the youngest and most beloved of the twelve Apostles, alone remained on Calvary, when, behold, a soldier approached; tradition tells us his name was Longinus. This soldier drew near, and gazed. 'He is dead,' said he, 'but I will strike Him again;' and violently aiming his lance at the right side of Jesus, the pointed steel entered the chest, penetrated to the Heart, and laid it open. When the lance was withdrawn, water and blood flowed from the wound. 'There came out blood and water' (John xix. 34). These were the last tears, the last drops of blood, from this Heart. 'And he that saw it hath given testimony' (John xix. 35).

You will meditate with St. Augustine, St. Bonaventure, and St. Bernard upon this great mystery. The thoughts of these great doctors of the Church may be reduced to two, viz. that this wound in the Heart is a fruitful source of grace for the just and the friends of this Divine Saviour; and secondly, that it is an asylum, a refuge, for poor sinners.

1. And first, it is an abundant source of graces for the just. The water which gushed forth, and the blood that flowed, prefigured those precious graces of mercy and love. 'You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains' (Isa. xii. 3). Come, ye just, ye pure and faithful souls, drink

peace and strength, light and life, from these mysterious sources; there shall you find happiness. O Jesus, may the water and blood which flow from the wound in Thy Sacred Heart so purify me that I may always dwell in that refuge of peace and love! *Amplius lava me ab omni iniquitate meâ, ô dulcissime Jesu, ut in Corde tuo omnibus diebus vitæ meæ merear habitare* (St. Bonav.). 'Wash me fully from all my sins, O sweetest Jesus, that I may be worthy to dwell in Thy Heart all the days of my life!' If Thy Adorable Heart was pierced on the Cross and opened after death, it was that we might always enter in and dwell there. *Ad hoc perforatum est latus tuum, . . . ad hoc vulneratum est Cor tuum, ut in illo habitare possimus* (St. Bern.). 'For this was Thy side pierced, for this was Thy Heart wounded, that we might dwell in it.'

St. Augustine, wishing us fully to understand this thought, justly observes that St. John makes use of a most striking expression when he says the Heart of Jesus was *opened* rather than wounded or torn: it was opened that we might always find shelter and grace therein. This mysterious wound having been made after death could never be healed or closed; we may, therefore, always find means to retire into this abode of peace and mercy. 'Behold, I have given before thee a door opened, which no man can shut' (Apoc. iii. 8). Then hasten thither, faithful souls, drink peace and love and life; hide yourselves there in the

day of trouble and temptation, and you shall conquer.

St. Bonaventure exclaims, 'Never more will I be separated from Him, it is so sweet to be with Jesus! Here will I make three tents—one in the wound in His hands, one in the wound in His feet, but above all in the wound in His Heart. There will I fix my abode, that I may speak to this Divine Heart and obtain all that I desire from Him.'

Again he says, 'O beloved wounds of my Jesus, tell me what delights are found when the soul enters by these wounds, and unites itself to the Heart of God! Ah, never could I express them; but experience them for yourself, then you will know.' This Seraphic Doctor speaks still more simply and touchingly when, addressing the lance which pierced the Divine Heart, he exclaims, 'O blessed lance! O, had I been in the place of that lance, never would I have been willing to leave the side of Christ; but I would have said, "Here is my rest, here will I dwell, because I have chosen it."'

2. But was it not specially for sinners that the Heart of Jesus was wounded? We cannot doubt it; for the prophet says, 'He was wounded for our iniquities' (Isa. liii. 5). In this sacred wound we shall find the source of pardon and mercy. 'The multitude of thy bowels and of thy mercies' (Isa. lxiii. 15). What can be purer than the water and blood which flow from this wound? (St. Bern.) This blood cries for mercy more loudly than the blood of Abel. Let us, poor sinners,

hasten, then, to hide ourselves in that sheltering Heart, where the bolts of justice can never reach us, or the thunders of vengeance strike us. 'Behold, we come unto Thee, for Thou art the Lord our God' (Baruch).

'O my Saviour,' says St. Bernard, 'wash me fully from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sins, that, purified by Thee, I may approach Thee who art purity itself, and dwell in Thy Heart all the days of my life.

Second Point: The Interior Wound of the Heart of Jesus Christ.—This hidden wound is by far the deepest, for the Heart of Jesus has known every pain and bitterness. 'The heart that knoweth the bitterness of his own soul' (Prov. xiv. 10). All have caused Him to suffer. But, as this book is more particularly addressed to those pious souls who wish to console their Divine Master, we will, in order to touch their hearts more deeply and practically, speak here only of the wounds which have been given Him by those who owed Him their love. Well might He say in showing us the blood flowing from this Divine Heart, 'It is in the house, and by the hands of those who loved Me, and called themselves My friends, that I have been wounded thus.'

Three terrible sorrows: He was abandoned, deserted by His disciples on the day of His trials, denied by the chief of His Apostles, betrayed by Judas.

1. Let us consider His abandonment, His desolation. He suffered greatly from this, for He had

relied upon these three disciples in the hour of His agony. He sought their aid, but obtained not so much as a word. Already, by His prophet, He bitterly complains at finding Himself thus abandoned: 'I looked for one that would grieve together with Me, but there was none; and for one that would comfort Me, and I found none' (Ps. lxviii. 22). It causes cruel suffering and bitter pain to a tender and sensitive heart to be abandoned by one's friends. 'The heart that knoweth bitterness.'

2. But to be ignored and denied by a friend, and by that friend whom one has preferred to all others, is the most painful and humiliating of trials. Peter, the chief of the Apostles, declared three times with an oath, at the taunt of a little servant, that he knew not Jesus! Ah, those words of the unfaithful disciple reëchoed in the Heart of that good Master, and wounded Him so deeply that, unable to conceal His pain, He cast upon Peter a look so tearful that the unhappy Apostle was touched and converted by it.

3. Unquestionably the most distressing trial to a faithful friend is to find himself betrayed: in such a case the more beloved the treacherous friend, the more cruel would be the grief, the more deeply would the heart be wounded. Jesus was betrayed by Judas, whom He had loved so much; Judas, to whom He had given the name of Apostle, and the power to work miracles, in whom He had even placed special confidence (for it was to Judas that the charge of the money necessary for the use

of the good Master and His disciples was confided); Judas, whom He had loaded with blessings, and whom He had warned in vain against the temptations which beset him by His tears at the washing of the feet, by the clearest and most distinct counsels at the Supper, when He said, 'One of you will betray Me;' Judas, whom He yet called His friend, even at the very moment when the traitor sold Him, and delivered Him to the murderers with a kiss. Ah, who can ever describe or measure such sorrow! To be abandoned, ignored, denied, betrayed, and, worst of all, by his iriends. What bitterness, what a wound for the Heart of Jesus! 'The heart that knoweth bitterness.'

But, alas, is it not true that even now, and upon our altars in the mysteries of His love, the Heart of Jesus is often wounded in the same way by those who ought to love Him? He is abandoned, forgotten. Many yet deny Him, and by some He is even sold and betrayed.

In how many churches is He not abandoned? There are only the angels to adore Him. Yet it is not for the angels He remains upon earth, but for us. Sometimes He hopes. When He sees any one enter the sanctuary, He thinks He may count upon a friend, as on the three disciples in His agony in the garden. But they are only tepid souls, and have not even a word of consolation for Him. 'I looked, but there was none.'

Must we speak of those who, like Peter, deny Him; those unworthy and cowardly apostates,

ready to swear they have never seen or known Him; those wretched slaves to human respect who are always ready to deny God, His law, His promises, and His religion? In vain Jesus looks on these men, and weeps; they remain unmoved.

Again, there are perfidious traitors, like Judas; perhaps not so many as formerly, but still there are such; and this is a deep grief for the Heart of Jesus—a sorrow all the more bitter that, having shown such love for His ungrateful disciples, these souls should always resist His grace, and stubbornly perish in terrible despair. It is, then, the secret and interior wound of the Heart of Jesus that we must consider in this meditation. You will strive to console your good Master, and make reparation for so many outrages by the fervour of your prayers at the foot of His tabernacle, which you will visit with faith, and, above all, by a fervent Holy Communion during this blessed month.

Your God will manifest Himself to you, as He did to the Blessed Margaret Mary, His faithful spouse; and, showing you the bleeding wound in His Divine Heart, He will speak those words which ought to break your heart with grief, 'It is you who have wounded My Heart, you who ought to love Me.' When you hear this mild reproach, your heart will be touched, you will begin to love God, and you will beseech Him to wound you with the darts of His love.

'Heart of Jesus, burning with love of me,
Inflame my heart with love of Thee!'

SEVENTH DAY.

THE WATER AND THE BLOOD, FIGURE OF GRACE.

'Hic est qui venit per aquem et sanguinem, non in aqua solum, sed in aqua et sanguine.'

'This is He that came by water and blood; not by water only, but by water and blood' (1 John v. 6).

When the soldier Longinus withdrew the lance which had opened the Heart of Jesus, water and blood were instantly seen to flow from that deep wound; and if you carefully contemplate a picture of this Adorable Heart—that touching symbol of love given us by Jesus—you will observe drops of blood and tears flowing from that mysterious wound. But as it is blood which is generally represented as issuing from that Divine Heart, we will say but few words respecting that sacred stream of water, and will direct our meditation principally upon the Precious Blood.

I. The Water.—It was for love of us that the last tears of this Divine Heart were shed. St. John Chrysostom tells us that the water and blood flowing from this sacred wound are a figure of all the graces obtained for us through our Divine Master's death. The water, he adds, flowed forth before the blood,* because, in the order of our

* St. John says, 'Blood and water.' Nevertheless, nearly all commentators and Fathers of the Church appear to think that water flowed before the blood. The Church, in her sacred liturgy, seems to adopt the same view.

salvation, we receive the first grace through the waters of baptism, before the blood of the sacred mysteries flows in our veins, to purify and nourish our souls.

God had promised by His prophet Ezechiel that He would one day open this living source of the pure waters of this Heart, to purify and soften our hearts. 'And I will pour upon you clean water, and you shall be cleansed from all your filthiness; and will give you a new heart; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh' (Ezech. xxxvi. 25, 26). These words are most touching, and apply perfectly to the subject of our meditation. 'I will shed,' He says, 'upon you clean water, and you shall be cleansed from all your filthiness, and I will give you a new heart. I will change your heart; I will take away the heart of stone from your breast; I will give you a heart of flesh, a feeling heart.' So that this mysterious water flowing from the Heart of Jesus Christ will not only cleanse and purify, but also render our hearts tender and soft.

St. Augustine assures us that this sacred water possesses yet another virtue, that of appeasing the burning thirst of the passions, by which all hearts are more or less consumed. 'Not only,' says he, 'is it a salutary bath for the cleansing of souls, but a refreshing and a thirst-quenching draught.' Your soul is thirsty, it is consumed with thirst. 'O, all you who thirst, hasten and come to Me,' says

Jesus; 'come to these waters, come with joy. The fruitful source of these waters is open, they flow from My Heart; you shall draw from it with joy; you shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains' (Isa. xii. 3). 'And he who shall drink of the water that I will give him shall not thirst for ever. But the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting' (John iv. 14).

Moved by this sweet invitation, and approaching with confidence the wound in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, you will say to Him in words full of fervour, 'O my God, give me this water, that I may drink and thirst no more' (John iv. 15). I burn, and nothing this world contains has ever been able to appease my thirst. I have drank at the source of its vain pleasures, its deceitful riches, its glory, and yet I burn; nothing has sufficed to quench my devouring thirst: as the panting stag of the desert runs hither and thither seeking water, so my soul seeks and longs to find the source of living waters. 'My soul thirsted.' Lord, show me the source, give me to drink of these waters. 'Give me this water, that I thirst no more.'

II. The Blood.—Every one knows that the heart, the material organ of life, is full of blood, which is formed by it, purified, and transmitted to every part of the human body by an infinity of small vessels called arteries and veins, after which this blood returns to the heart to be circulated anew. Life dwells in our heart's blood, and if it is shed,

life is lost. If the heart's movements are suspended, the blood ceases to circulate—life is extinct. The blood that flows from any injured or wounded member comes from the heart, even though the wound be remote from this centre and focus of life. So it was blood from the Heart of Jesus which fell like plentiful rain upon the earth, whether it flowed in the Garden of Olives, at the scourging, at the crowning with thorns, or at the Crucifixion. It ran from His bruised shoulders, His lacerated brow, His hands and feet pierced by nails, and this blood ever came from His Heart.

In His infinite love for us, He willed that His Heart should be opened; and by this wound given after death, He gave us even the last drop of His blood. Observe it is in this precious blood that our souls must be purified and washed. It is this blood which is the true price of our souls, and the cause of our redemption; in a word, it is through this blood that our souls must be nourished by His life and inebriated by His love. We shall meditate for a few moments on these three thoughts.

1. All the virtues of the adorable blood of Jesus have been prefigured, and even clearly revealed, in the Sacred Book of eternal verities. Open this book and read. You will find in its very first pages that blood cries out—the blood of Abel, and God heard that voice. Our Saviour's blood cries yet more loudly, and asks for mercy more forcibly than the other, which called for vengeance. 'Speaking better than Abel' (Heb. xii. 24).

Further on, we find it was the blood of a lamb which was sprinkled on the doors of all the houses of Israel, to preserve that people from death. The Lord said, 'I shall see the blood, and shall pass over you' (Exod. xii. 13); and the angel of wrath who exterminated the children of Egypt, passed by, and spared all those upon whose doorposts the blood was sprinkled.

Upon the altars of the true God victims were immolated, hecatombs of bulls and lowing cattle, young lambs, and countless doves. The blood of these animals flowed; and St. Paul says, 'If the blood of goats and of oxen sanctify such as are defiled, how much more shall the blood of Christ, shed for us, sanctify men, and ransom them from death?' (Heb. ix. 14.)

It is, then, in this blood that our souls must be purified and washed. Happy those who have whitened their robes in the blood of the Lamb! They alone shall be pure and spotless in the Lord's eyes. St. John adds, 'The blood of the Son of God washes away all our sins. This God hath loved us, and purified us in His blood' (Apoc. i. 5). 'What is purer than this divine blood?' says St. Augustine. This blood was only shed for the remission of our sins.

2. Again, this adorable blood is the price of our souls. St. Augustine says, 'The Redeemer came and paid the price.' He paid what was necessary, the full value. He shed all His blood, and purchased the whole world. Do you ask at what

price? Behold what it cost Him: His blood, even all of it. The blood of Christ was the price. For, without the shedding of this precious blood, there was neither pardon nor redemption. The blood of the Lamb alone could blot out the sentence of our condemnation; and by virtue of this blood only can we be saved, and rendered just and pure in God's eyes. For this reason the name Jesus, which means Saviour, was given to Him in blood on the day of His circumcision; and then, as on the day of His death, His Heart's blood was shed to ransom us, for He shed it out of love for us. 'He loved me, and delivered Himself for me' (Gal. ii. 20).

3. But, above all, it is in the wound of the Heart of Jesus that our soul must find life, and drink in the delights of love. 'O sweet and beloved wound of our Saviour!' exclaims St. Bonaventure. What can be more marvellous? His death gives life; His wounds heal; His blood purifies our souls and makes them clean. It is His Heart's blood which still flows on the altar, giving life and grace. The sacred wine which creates saints and rejoices souls is the blood of Jesus. Go, faithful souls, and drink, and be inebriated at the mysterious source of this blood.

I entreat the pious reader to repeat frequently during this day these ejaculatory words from the beautiful prayer of St. Ignatius: 'Soul of Christ, Water from the side of Christ, purify me! Blood of Christ, inebriate me with thy love!'

When you kiss your crucifix, press your lips specially upon the wound in the Heart, from which, if you would drain even the last drops of His blood, there is always sufficient left. Go with confidence; drink with love.

EIGHTH DAY.

THE FLAMES OF THE HEART OF JESUS.

First Symbol of His Love.

'Ignem veni mittere in terram, et quid volo nisi ut accendatur?'

'I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?' (Luke xii. 49.)

In contemplating a picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, that touching symbol of His infinite love, we are most struck with the flame by which it is consumed and surrounded. The Heart cannot contain the flame which burns it and escapes from the wound; it plays round the cross, and passes through the thorns, though, as we have already observed, without touching them. The Heart is enveloped by this mysterious flame and penetrated by it—in a word, it is a burning Heart, an inflamed Heart. We must attentively observe the cross, the wound, and all those other attributes upon which we have already meditated.

This sacred fire which consumes the Heart of Jesus is love and zeal. These devouring flames

must cause suffering, and we may apply the words of the Gospel to them, though not written in that sense: 'I am tormented in this flame' (Luke xvi. 24). He has but one wish—to communicate this fire, to see it spread through the whole earth, and at last gain our hearts: 'I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?'

The two last days of the first Novena shall be consecrated to meditating upon so beautiful a subject. To-day the love of Jesus; to-morrow His zeal for souls.

The object of the devotion of the Sacred Heart, then, is love. Jesus Himself revealed this to His faithful spouse, the Blessed Margaret Mary: He complained of men's ingratitude in not loving Him, asking and seeking to be known and loved. It is a new promulgation, and, as it were, a final and admirable interpretation of the first precept of the great law—thou shalt love; a law and precept at once glorious and humiliating for us; for whilst the Lord, in giving us this holy commandment, proves how much He values the affections of our hearts, He shows us at the same time how He distrusts us for our ingratitude and inconstancy. Alas, this great God is not mistaken; for, notwithstanding the formal precept of love and the anathema launched against those who would not love Him, there are still many souls seduced by the vanities of the world, many hearts consumed by other flames, and drawn away by another weight, as St. Augustine expresses it.

First, then, we will, in a few words, interpret the text of the law of love, and afterwards question our own hearts to ascertain if we truly love that God who has so loved us.

I. Let us commence by summing up in a few words the teaching of faith on this point, which is fully contained in the Act of Charity if well understood: 'My God, I love Thee with my whole heart,' &c.

In making this act you see plainly that God is the *end* or *object* of your affections, the *motive* or *reason* of your love being His infinite perfections; above all, His goodness and His benefits. The *measure* of this love is to be *above all else, with all your heart* and with all your strength; for, as St. Bernard says, 'There can be no limit in loving God.'

So in all the acts of religion love is the greatest, the most necessary, the most essential and divine. Without this charity one is nothing; all would be useless, whilst a single act of love can justify the most guilty soul in the Lord's eyes, who loves those who love Him. Charity not only purifies hearts, but enriches them with graces; it transforms the faithful soul, and closely unites it to God; for He really and substantially dwells in that soul as His own temple. It is one of the most certain results of love to transform a man into that which he loves. St. Augustine says, 'If he loves earth, he is nothing more than earth; but if he loves God,—then what do I say?—he is God!'

Who can describe the delights of those hearts filled with divine love? To understand this, one must have felt this consuming fire. St. Augustine says, 'Give me a loving heart, and it will understand this.' Ask some of those loving souls who have been consumed by these flames. One spark from the Heart of Jesus sufficed to consume them with ineffable delights and mysterious dolours; this fire of love, which burns not the cross or the thorns of the Heart of Jesus, could neither consume nor dry their tears. To love and to suffer was their life, their happiness, their martyrdom. Ask St. Teresa of Jesus, St. Madeleine of Pazzi, St. Francis Xavier, St. Stanislaus—they were consumed with love. Above all, ask our blessed and dear sister Margaret Mary what tears she shed in her sweetest transports, what happiness she felt in sufferings, what crosses also in the flames, what life in death! That simple and common expression, Heaven upon earth, is the only one which can truthfully express these apparent contradictions. These saints all could say with the prophet, 'There came in my heart as a burning fire, and I was wearied, not being able to bear it' (Jer. xx. 9). In my heart is a burning fire, and I die, for I can no longer support its sweet ardours.

If we now seek some motives to light up this flame of divine love in our own hearts, this subject would have no end; for we find these reasons in the infinite perfections of God, and in the benefits without number with which He has loaded us.

Let it suffice to quote here these touching words from the inmost heart of those who have thus ardently loved; let us endeavour to comprehend their true meaning whilst we meditate upon them; and we shall in the end relish and realise them whilst humbly reciting them:

'O Jesus, Jesus,' exclaims St. Bernard, 'tell me whom Thou art and all Thou hast done for us; how Thou hast been able to command us to love Thee! My sweet and most loving Jesus, so good to that soul who seeks, finds, and possesses Thee! Listen to me whilst I speak to Thy Heart. True it is I am but a poor sinner; yet Thy goodness encourages me to speak, Thy love prompts me, and Thy tenderness invites me. Thou hast said to Thine Apostles, and through them to us: "Abide in Me, and I in you." I conjure Thee, O good Jesus, my beloved and most dear Jesus, to tell me the reason, the cause, of so much love, and why Thou commandest us to love Thee and to dwell in Thy love? Tell me, so that those who love Thee not may hear it and may begin to love Thee; that those who have begun to love Thee may be consumed by a greater love of Thee! When I think of all Thou hast done for me, and of what I have done for Thee, my heart is broken; I tremble, I am troubled, grief overwhelms me. Thy Cross tells me what Thou hast done, and how Thou hast died for me. Ah, this is why I trust in Thee, why I love and cherish Thee with my whole heart.'

We might transcribe whole pages of this sublime discourse, which concludes with these admirable words, that lead us to the second part of the meditation: 'The love of Jesus,' he says, 'is full of sweetness and charms. The heart is not tormented by it, but filled with delights; it is not weakened, but fortified; this love makes it despise all earthly things, and long only for heaven. He delights only in the law of His God, and is always faithful in performing His sacred precepts,' &c.

II. What could you reply to Jesus Christ, my dear reader, if this good Master said to you, as He did to His disciple, 'Lovest thou Me?' What could you answer Him? Examine yourself, question your own heart, and judge yourself. It will be necessary to pay attention to certain rules, by which the reply to this question will have to be decided.

When we love any one, we carefully avoid all that could trouble or grieve him; we eagerly and gladly do all in our power to give him pleasure; in a word, our sympathies and antipathies are mutual. Let us even speak, if possible, more simply. Those who love, delight to be together, they see one another with pleasure; their thoughts are made known to each other; one would gladly devote and sacrifice oneself, and even suffer for a friend. This is why Jesus, who has loved men so much, came down from heaven and chose to die upon a Cross. He loved infinitely.

Do you, then, love Him? You, who do not fear

to wound and offend Him, even to put Him to death in your heart,—can you say that you love Him if you so often and so easily commit mortal sin, the cause of His death on the Cross?

And you, who with so little regret for the many venial sins you commit, can you say you love Him when you tear His Heart with the cruel thorns of His crown? You, who find it so tedious to be near Him, who visit Him so rarely, and who speak to Him only with a sort of aversion, or even know not what to say to Him, and have nothing to confide to Him in the secrecy of prayer,—can you say that you love Him? And you who cease not to grieve Him by your resistance to grace, to the most intimate solicitations of His tenderness; you who refuse Him the smallest sacrifices, who can never suffer anything by which you may prove to Him that you think of, and wish to please, Him,—could you say that you love Him? His Heart carries a cross, and yet you have a horror of the cross! It is crowned with thorns, and you fear the least trouble! It is wounded and bleeds, but you will not see or hear, or do anything that annoys, or displeases, or causes you loss! How could you say you loved Him? No; you love Him not; your heart, which has neither cross nor thorns, has no flames of love, and is not like the Heart of Jesus. You do not know yourself.

O, how few are the generous souls! How rare the hearts belonging only and wholly to God and to Jesus! How few there are who love Love it-

self! Love is not loved. Jesus Christ gives us His Heart that we may make reparation for so much indifference and ingratitude; contemplate it, listen to those sweet words, upon which we should never cease to meditate, *Behold this Heart, which has loved men so much;* make a yet greater sacrifice to-day that you may console this Heart, and recite that perfect Act of Charity which is attributed to St. Francis Xavier:

'My God, I love Thee, not because
I hope for heaven thereby,
Nor because they who love Thee not
Must burn eternally.
Thou, O my Jesus, Thou didst me
Upon the Cross embrace;
For me didst bear the nails and spear,
And manifold disgrace,
And griefs and torments numberless,
And sweat of agony,
E'en death itself—and all for one
Who was Thine enemy.
Then why, O blessed Jesus Christ,
Should I not love Thee well?
Not for the sake of winning heaven
Or of escaping hell;
Not with the hope of gaining aught,
Not seeking a reward,
But as Thyself hast loved me,
O ever-loving Lord.
E'en so I love Thee, and will love,
And in Thy praise will sing,
Solely because Thou art my God
And my eternal King.'

NINTH DAY.

THE FLAMES OF THE HEART OF JESUS.

Second Symbol of Zeal.

'Zelus domus tuæ comedit me.'

'For the zeal of Thy house hath eaten me up' (Ps. lxviii. 10).

We said that the flames encircling and consuming the Heart of Jesus, not only symbolised His love for us, but the ardour of His zeal for the glory of God His Father and for our salvation. Zeal is in reality the purest flame of charity. When a soul is possessed by the fire of this love, it cannot be concealed; the flames burst forth, and seize upon all within their reach. If a spark of love should fall upon your heart to-day from the Heart of Jesus, it would set it on fire; it would also spread around, gaining new and happy victims of love.

Priests are often called upon to witness the marvellous action of this admirable law in the supernatural order: a convert soon becomes an apostle, he wishes to share his happiness with others, and communicate to all hearts the fire which consumes his own; but, as with natural fire, which first attacks that which is nearest to it, the proportion of its results varies according as the materials which it seizes upon are more or less inflammable. A hard stone cannot be consumed like wood. Thus sometimes in the same

family there are hearts which long resist the action of the purest and most ardent zeal, whilst many others at once feel the action of this sacred fire, and are gained to the love of God.

We will meditate a while upon the nature of zeal and the excellence of this virtue. We will then strive to light up this sacred fire in our own hearts, that through us it may reach many other souls.

I. Zeal is certainly the greatest of all virtues, for it is the very flame of charity, the purest and most divine essence of its qualities. God loves the souls He has created in His own image. Jesus Christ loves the souls He has redeemed at the price of His own blood. The chief wish of our great God is to save souls; it is the incessant labour of the Three Adorable Persons to assist in this divine work. To coöperate for the salvation of a soul, whether by prayer, by teaching, by example, by sacrifice, or by any other way whatsoever, is, says a holy doctor, the most perfect, the most divine of all works.

The most magnificent rewards have also been promised and assured, not to the Apostles only, who are conquerors of souls, and who save them by thousands; not only to priests, who nourish and direct them in the ways of salvation; but to every man whoever he may be, whose happiness it is to reclaim and convert a sinner; for it is written he shall save his soul, and shall secure his salvation. You will gladly observe this happy

amphibology of the sacred text, I mean the double sense of this apostolic phrase. The Holy Spirit herein reveals to us that such a man will save two souls—the soul of his brother whom he has converted, and assuredly also his own soul; for all his sins will be covered and blotted out by this act of charity. 'He who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins' (James v. 20). Be not astonished at this interpretation of a promise at once so touching and magnificent; but rather recognise in it the Justice of God united to His infinite goodness. For if heaven is promised to ordinary charity, to the corporal works of mercy, is it not fitting that a still greater recompense should be reserved to zeal, and all her spiritual works of mercy? Jesus Christ will one day say to those who have compassion on His poor, and who give them bread, 'Come, ye blessed children of My Father, come; for I was hungry, and ye gave Me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me to drink, &c: enter ye into glory.' You see that these are the words of a just and faithful God, above all of a good and grateful God, who never forgets anything done out of love for Him, not even the cup of cold water.

But how different are the works of zeal! They deal with a hunger and thirst more terrible than that by which the body is consumed! You have nourished a soul with truth; you have refreshed a

dry and arid heart, devoured by the fire of pleasure; you have quenched the cruel thirst of the passions. Ah, the poverty and misery of souls is a thousand times more sad; and to save one soul from eternal death will assuredly merit a greater reward from God. If you give alms, you will save one soul, your own; for charity covers the sins of a lifetime, and that soul shall not enter into darkness. 'For alms deliver from all sin and from death, and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness' (Tobias iv. 11); but if you have zeal, if you turn your brother from his sin, if you convert him to God, you will save two souls,—that soul restored by you to the paths of justice, and your own, which will be crowned by Jesus Christ when He summons you to judge the living and the dead with Him in glory.

Labour, therefore, with ardour for the salvation of your brethren; and though you may be weak and inconstant yourself, though you may be wretched and guilty, strive to do good, to save a soul, and you will not lose your own, for God will love you; yes, even were you covered with the stains of sin, God could not refrain from loving you. The beautiful title of hunter of souls has been given to some saints, and there have also been sinners who have merited it. So, whoever you may be, strive to give the Heart of Jesus this joy: save souls, and you will save your own: angels will rejoice, and you will be beloved of God.

II. After these considerations you will examine

yourselves, and see if you have a spark of this sacred fire, if your heart burns with that flame which Jesus desired to cast on the earth. He asks you also Himself if you love Him. If you are able truly to say that you love Him, He will speak to you as He did to Peter, tell you to save and to gain souls to Him, 'Feed My lambs, feed My sheep!'

And, first of all, do you possess the sentiment of zeal? We will next see what is the action or life of this virtue.

The sentiment of zeal, or the desire to do good, and, to speak in the language of the Holy Scrip tures, the thirst for souls, will be a certain sign that this sacred fire burns within you. We have already said that it cannot burn in any heart without giving outward evidence of its brightness. This would begin by prayer. The apostolate of prayer is a great power in the Church, and zeal would lead you incessantly to this mild violence with God, above all, with the Heart of Jesus, who so loves souls. Observe how all those who have loved this Saviour-God strove by their prayers and tears to draw down mercy to the earth, and to obtain the conversion of poor sinners.

St. Teresa never ceased to pray for them: she continually asked Jesus Christ for souls; and we read in her life that, on one occasion, when she prayed with great fervour, she gave utterance to so powerful a cry, so profound a sigh from her inmost heart, that her celestial Spouse revealed to her He was so touched by her prayer that six

thousand souls were saved by her intercession, and that she would one day see them in heaven.

St. Francis Xavier prayed day and night for infidels and sinners. Who can tell the number of souls saved by his prayers? How beautiful is his prayer to Jesus Christ! What zeal, what fire, it presupposes in the heart of this noble apostle; and how sensible must the Heart of Jesus have been to the mild and tender reproaches of His faithful servant when he said to Him, 'It is a disgrace, O my God, after all Thou hast done to save souls, that so many should be lost. Give me souls!' Even in dying he wished to save more, and he would have preferred to fight and suffer for them on earth than to go to Heaven. 'Give me souls!' And that beloved saint, the pure virgin of the Visitation, spouse of the Heart of Jesus, our dear sister Margaret Mary, what constant prayer she made to God for the salvation of souls, and how many were saved by her! One might say she thought of nothing else, and that she only prayed and suffered for that intention. 'Give me souls!'

So, true zeal, that thirst for souls, cannot be satisfied with prayer and desire alone; but as it is love, it must also act, and, above all, it must suffer. The action of zeal is powerful, its sufferings are always fruitful. What, then, are its works? At first, words—those wise counsels which turn souls from evil or lead them to virtue—and then, above all, examples of Christian life, which attract

and lead others in the path of virtue, and in which lies a strength which cannot long be resisted, especially when these examples are set by those who are beloved.

But the principal work of zeal, its most penetrating and always victorious action, is sacrifice: you only have to suffer for a soul, and you are sure to save it. Was it not by His Cross and blood that Jesus Christ became the Saviour of mankind; and is there a single apostle in His Church who has not suffered or died for souls? Pray and suffer, then, for souls, and God will give them to you.

Before concluding, it is necessary, perhaps, to recommend prudence to the pious reader. It is very important that zeal should be discreet in word, and wise and reserved in action. St. Bernard has briefly indicated the qualities which render this virtue efficacious: 'Let your zeal,' says he, 'be full of ardour, but wise and prudent; finally, let it be constant or persevering.' Imitate God Himself: see what patience, what calmness, and yet what love, what zeal for souls! Speak to God more than to men; repress natural eagerness, impatient desires, anxiety, and discouragement. God will one day give you that soul you seek for, and for which you suffer so much. Have confidence.

You will finish this exercise by a fervent prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, asking Him for many souls; the greater your requests, the more

will you obtain. Beseech Him by His Cross, by the thorns, by the wound, by the blood, and, above all, by the flames of His Divine Heart! What sinners could resist these darts of love, or the violence of that consuming fire? Make use of St. Xavier's prayer for the conversion of infidels, and from the depth of your heart say, with a burning sigh, like St. Teresa of Jesus, 'Give me souls, O my God, give me souls, and keep all besides!' (Gen. xiv. 21.)

Second Novena.

REVELATIONS OR EFFUSIONS OF THE HEART OF JESUS.

TENTH DAY.

THE LOOKS OF THE HEART OF JESUS.

'Erunt oculi mei et cor meum ibi cunctis diebus.'

'My eyes and My Heart shall be there always' (3 Kings ix. 3).

UNTIL now we have only contemplated the symbol of the love of Jesus, the Heart with all its glorious attributes, the sweet image given by the the Divine Master to His faithful spouse, which she has left us traced in her blood. We shall

now enter into this Sacred Heart, that we may better learn how to know and love it.

But how can a heart reveal its most intimate sentiments, its secret thoughts, and all the movements by which it is agitated? It is now time that we should explain the principles of the doctrine at which we hinted in the Preface of this work; for it will discover to us all the treasures of grace, love, and mercy which flow from this Sacred Heart, as their living and fruitful source: 'For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead corporally' (Coloss. ii. 9). 'A place of rivers, very broad and spacious streams' (Isa. xxxiii. 21).

How, then, can the Heart of Jesus speak to our hearts? What can be this mysterious language? Ah, do you not know? The heart does not always need articulate sounds to express its sentiments; they can be expressed by looks, by tears, and sighs. This is the natural language of the heart: it is everywhere the same, and understood throughout the whole world. But if this Heart speaks, and wishes to express its most intimate sentiments, it must have a special and inspired language of its own to make known its transports; such are burning words of love, or long and tender confidences poured forth lovingly, and by which He not only reveals, but gives and devotes Himself to those He loves. This will be the subject of this Novena and its exercises: we shall meditate upon the looks of this Divine Heart, its tears, its

sighs, and its most intimate communications. First, then, we will consider the looks. It is certain that the eyes are the mirror of the soul, and the first language of the heart. We cannot even hide or dissimulate a deep feeling, an extraordinary agitation or passion. As philosophers say, a look *betrays* one, the eyes *speak;* pity fills them with tears, and anger with a sombre or sparkling fire; whilst in love they have at one and the same time both tears and flames.

The Heart of Jesus will reveal Himself to our hearts by the most sympathising looks, and will afford the subject of a study at once sweet and luminous.

I. Let us say a word of those looks of which the Gospel has told us nothing positively, but which must occur to the mind of any one who has the most simple acquaintance with divine and human things. Think of the first look of the Child Jesus upon His Mother, and of His sweet smile, in which were blended tenderness and love!

Again, in the manger, there was the look He gave the shepherds and the kings of the East, for without a miracle the Divine Child could express Himself in no other way? He turned His eyes upon them that they might understand how much He was touched with the simplicity of their faith, and that He received with joy and gratitude their mysterious gifts.

And when Jesus prayed at Nazareth, or when during long nights He prayed on Mount Zion, what

looks He cast up to heaven, and how His Heart spoke in those sublime and solitary visions! His eyes must often have been filled with tears, or have glowed with the fire of the most ardent love. When He drove out from the Temple those who profaned it by unworthy traffic, what lightnings flashed from His eyes! One might even say that thunderbolts were launched from them, for His Heart burned with zeal for the glory of God His Father.

And last of all, in the dying looks of Jesus on Mount Calvary you will discover the full sentiments of His Heart. Submission and resignation are expressed in the raising of his eyes to heaven, grief and forgiveness in His downward looks upon His murderers, pity and mercy for His people, filial tenderness and farewell regrets for His Mother, the liveliest compassion for Magdalen and St. John; and in expiring, His last look upon earth was full of love, pity, and zeal, that all hearts might be drawn to His Heart.

II. But we will now hasten to consider the looks of Jesus specially mentioned in the Gospel, and the particular intention of the Holy Ghost in pointing them out. It is easy to see that these were inspired and directed by His Divine Heart, and that graces of love and mercy descended at the same time from this Adorable Heart and those eyes filled with kindness. It may be said that the looks of the Divine Master were ever animated by a feeling of pity or tenderness, and we shall

endeavour to discriminate the characteristic shades of these sentiments.

1. We will first remark what we may call *the summoning look*, by which souls are warned. The Gospel mentions two remarkable instances. Jesus passed a man seated at his desk, the publican Levi (Luke v. 27): 'He cast a look upon him, and said, Follow Me.' But what a look it was! how profound, and how full of love! For the man was touched, ravished, drawn away, and at once rose and followed Him; this man was the Apostle Matthew. He obeyed his Master, and recognised his God; he is now one of the greatest saints in heaven.

The other of these *summoning looks*, though more tender, and direct from the Heart, was cast upon the rich young man who came to seek Jesus, and ask Him what he must do to gain eternal life. The Divine Master reminded him of the words of the law. The young man replied that he had always heeded them. Then Jesus spoke a secret to him from heaven: 'Go, sell all that you have, and follow Me.' And at these words, this unhappy youth, who was rich, hesitated, drew back, and went away, notwithstanding the mild and loving look which Jesus cast upon him. 'And Jesus, looking on him, loved him' (Mark x. 21). But he resisted, and closed his heart, or who can say what he might have become, had he been faithful? Perhaps, with John, he might have been a beloved disciple, and shared all the secrets, as he

had already gained the sympathies, of that Divine Heart.

O dear reader, if Jesus ever some day or other should look upon you and summon you one day, respond to Him, follow Him ; He has the words of eternal life, and to whom could you go, if not to your Saviour and your God ?

2. Let us meditate upon the *longing look* of sorrow and compassion cast by our Lord upon the city of Jerusalem. 'Seeing the city, He wept over it' (Luke xix. 41). What longings and regrets were in that prolonged look upon perfidious Zion ! We will interpret that other language of the Heart, His tears, in to-morrow's exercise ; but this look ! Who may understand it ? Immense as was the love it expressed, it was almost devoid of hope, as the accompanying words testify : 'How often would I !' (Matt. xxiii. 37.) 'If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day !' Then follow those terrible threats, so regretfully pronounced, as the tears which fell from His pitying eyes proved, while they rested on the battlements of the unhappy city : 'Seeing the city, He wept over it.'

You may easily apply these texts to your own soul. Does not Jesus look on it with tears ? Has it not also resisted many graces ? May it not be that this is His last visit to you ? Do not resist His merciful designs, do not cause His tears again to flow ; dread lest the threatenings of this God be not more terrible than His mercies would have been more abounding, and His love more generous. O

my God! Look upon me, Lord, and have compassion on me!

3. The look cast by our Lord upon His unfaithful disciple Peter was the most touching of all: 'And the Lord, turning, looked upon Peter' (Luke xxii. 61). Recall all the circumstances of this most astonishing—I was about to say most improbable—fall, if we take into consideration the character of the chief of the Apostles. He had been forewarned of it by his good Master: 'To-day, before the cock crows, thou shalt deny Me.' And yet Peter, so attached to Jesus, so intrepid, that he wished to defend Him in the Garden of Gethsemani against an army of soldiers and murderers, this Peter swore three times, at the mere word of a little servant-maid, that he knew not Jesus, *Non novi;* and it was at the moment of the third apostasy that Jesus, passing, turned and looked upon the disciple who denied Him. *Respexit.* If you now know anything of the Heart of Jesus, you may form some idea of the manner in which Jesus looked upon Peter. Was it with indignation, or with a reproachful glance, as if to say, 'Ungrateful man, did I not truly foretell that thou wouldst deny Me?' Ah, no! It was with feelings of mercy, love, and pity. Doubtless tears were in the eyes of this good Master, as if to say, 'Poor friend, thou dost indeed not know Me! But I know thee well, and love and pardon thee.' So tender and compassionate was this look that the unhappy Apostle was at once touched and converted by it. He wept, and until

the day of his death he never ceased to deplore his fault.

Ah, who could ever resist this conquering look of love! Alas, on the very same day, some hours previously, another disciple, Judas, had closed his heart against this same look which Jesus gave him, when, at the moment of His betrayal, He called Judas His friend! This traitor turned away his eyes that he might not see Jesus, and closed his ears that he might not hear Him; but on that very day he precipitated his soul into the abyss of eternal death.

In meditating on the contrast between these two cases, you will think with trembling on the abuse of grace, and you will ask of Jesus Christ the conversion of your soul and perseverance in His love. Make a visit to your Saviour in one of His churches, and choose in preference a solitary church, in which, humbly kneeling on the threshold, you may implore Him to look down upon you and speak to your heart, whilst He casts upon you a look of tenderness and compassion. You will hear and answer Him, and will give Him all He asks for. You will obey Him in all things. Perhaps He may say to you, as He did to His faithful spouse, the Blessed Margaret Mary: 'Behold this Heart, which has so loved mankind, which has loved you so much, even you, and receives only ingratitude from you, as from many others!' Now, to console this good Master, make at His feet an act of love and reparation with all

the fervour of which you are capable. Ah, what must have been the look of Jesus upon Margaret Mary, when He pronounced those words, 'Behold this Heart!' Never will there be any one, never will any artist upon this earth be, capable of expressing the sorrow, the love, and the mercy which, if we meditate upon that sweet image in the silence of the soul, and listen to the complaint of His Heart, one can imagine blended in that look which Jesus cast upon His faithful spouse.

ELEVENTH DAY.

THE TEARS OF THE HEART OF JESUS.

'Et lacrymatus est Jesus.'
'And Jesus wept' (John ix. 35).

TEARS, says St. Augustine, are the heart's blood. They are, at least, its most expressive language, for the emotions of the heart are sometimes too keen to be expressed in any other manner. When a man's heart is oppressed by grief or broken by a cruel sorrow, this blood flows abundantly, but it changes its name and colour when it reaches the eyes; then it becomes tears, and sometimes may be truly spoken of as tears of blood. When the heart of a man is too full of joy; so full, that it cannot contain its transports, tears burst forth in abundance; but the source of these tears of gladness is usually soon dried up on earth. We will medi-

tate a while upon the tears of Jesus, for that precious blood of His Heart was often seen to flow, and we shall follow the same plan as in the preceding meditation : I. A few words upon those tears of which the Gospel has not spoken positively. II. The tears actually shed, and expressly mentioned in the Sacred Scriptures.

I. There must have been in the life of Jesus Christ more than one circumstance in which the Man-God could not have restrained His tears. To doubt this would be to accuse the Heart of the Good Master of insensibility. Thus the Infant Jesus must have shed tears in the manger. Every child weeps on its entrance into this world ; and for *this* Child there was so much cause for weeping. That Child in the poor stable, for whom no room could be found in the inns of Bethlehem, early proved Himself the Man of Sorrows.

During the years of His exile in Egypt, who does not believe that this Child shed tears at beholding His sweet Mother and Joseph in so much trouble ?

Above all, at the death of the holy Joseph, His foster-father, when, at the supreme moment of his agony and his farewell, He blessed him, and pointed out heaven awaiting him, Jesus could not restrain His tears. When He communicated to Mary His Mother His resolution to enter on His public career, and bade her adieu, it is impossible not to believe that the Divine Saviour mingled His tears with those of His Mother.

The idea of the pious painter who represents Jesus shedding tears on the feet of Judas immediately before the Supper pleases me much. The Divine Master wished to wash the feet of all His Apostles. When it came to be Judas's turn, instead of pouring water on his feet, as He had done to the others, He took them in His hands, and bending His head, so as to cover His face with His hair and to hide His grief, He bathed them with burning tears, hoping to touch the heart of this perfidious Apostle; but Judas remained coldly indifferent and insensible to this last proof of tenderness. His hard-heartedness thus increased the grief of the Saviour, and caused the precious blood of His Heart to flow more abundantly.

We have already spoken of those tears in the eyes of Jesus when He looked upon Peter, who had just denied Him, and which so touched the heart of the unfaithful disciple that he could not refrain from weeping immediately.

And when Jesus, carrying His Cross and going to Calvary, met Mary, His desolate Mother; when from that high cross He beheld her standing on the mountain, surely there must have been many tears in that last farewell look of His Heart. 'And Jesus wept.' You need only meditate on these various circumstances of His mortal life to see that these tears must have been shed.

II. But it is now time to enter upon the second part of this exercise, and to speak of the tears actually shed by Jesus Christ upon earth. Let

us strive to comprehend all the love and mercy in this precious blood which flowed from His Heart.

1. His tears over Jerusalem. 'He wept over it' (Luke xix. 41). This long look of the Saviour upon this unfaithful city, a look full of grief, was most touching. In yesterday's meditation we said there was at first an expression of longing in this look; but in the tears, pity and love prevailed.

He Himself interprets these tears, and reveals His immense love in the cry which escapes from His Heart. 'How often have I wished, and thou wouldest not! Thou hast refused! Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets!' (Luke xiii. 34.) Ah, if thou hadst known! And after some moments of sorrowful silence, Jesus uttered the words of threatening, and foretold the approaching ruin of the unfaithful city: 'For the days shall come upon thee' (Luke xix. 43). In speaking thus, His tears ran down in abundance. What goodness! What a Heart!

All the Fathers have explained this passage of the Gospel, and given the same interpretation to these tears of Jesus; they say that the perfidious city is an emblem of an ungrateful soul, over which the Saviour cannot but weep, because He loves it, and longs to save it. He calls it, urges it, and loads it with graces, at first with *ordinary*, afterwards with *special* and *decisive* graces. If these are persistently resisted, He threatens and strikes. The complete ruin of Jerusalem is a

striking image of the eternal vengeance which will fall upon the impenitent sinner and destroy him for ever.

Think here that Jesus has often wept over your soul; even at this moment behold Him shedding tears over you, and be softened and touched by them; be converted and return to His love.

2. The tears of Jesus at the grave of Lazarus. These were tears of love. The Gospel specially draws our attention to this sentiment, so marked throughout the whole of the sacred recital, and which so surprised the Jews who witnessed the resurrection; they were more struck with the kindness of His Heart than astonished at His power, as was proved by the cry that at once escaped from them all. They did not say, This Jesus is a God, this is the Messiah; but, 'Behold how He loved him!' (John xi. 36.) What kindness, what love, what a Heart! and not, What power, what a miracle! They believed. 'Many believed on Him' (ibid.). It was love that conquered these ungrateful and unbelieving Jews.

There are few subjects of contemplation in the whole Gospel so beautiful as this of Jesus shedding tears over the tomb of His friend; among all the many touching pictures in Holy Writ this is the most moving. You will see this scene with the eyes of faith, and you will enter into His Heart, all whose sentiments will be revealed to you by these tears, and the words spoken by those who were present.

You will readily make application of this subject to your soul, over which also doubtless Jesus has often wept, but perhaps, alas, without recalling it to life. Many there are of these dead souls, insensible to the tears of their Saviour and deaf to His voice. He says to them, 'I am the resurrection and the life' (John xi. 25). 'Lazarus, come forth from the corruption of the grave!' He cries, with a loud voice (ibid.). And yet hardened sinners remain buried in darkness. Pray fervently to Jesus, O you who know how kind and powerful He is! Parents, friends of these dead ones, Christian mothers, virtuous sisters, like Martha and Mary, pray; and touched by your sorrow He will weep with you, and work this miracle of the resurrection of a soul. 'Have confidence, your brother shall rise again' (John xi. 23). He shall live and be saved.

3. The tears of Jesus Christ upon the Cross at the moment of His death. The Apostle St. Paul has revealed this circumstance of the last agony of the Saviour on Calvary. Besides, nothing is more consistent with nature; for at death, as at birth, nearly all shed tears. The Apostle says Jesus uttered a loud cry, and shed tears in offering the sacrifice of His life. 'With a strong cry and tears, offering up,' &c. (Heb. v. 7). Mighty strength and divine power were in this last cry, in these last tears of an expiring Heart, at that moment when the eyes of Jesus were about to close in death. It was a cry that reëchoed throughout heaven; these tears were gathered by angels; the earth

itself was moved, the rocks of Calvary were broken, the dead rose from their graves, and the executioners beat their breasts as they descended the hill with softened hearts.

Pause and think that often on our altars a God still weeps, and ceases not to cry aloud at the hour of the august Sacrifice, which is not only a figure of the death of Jesus Christ, but the renewal of these dolorous mysteries, and actually and identically the same Sacrifice as that of Calvary, for it is the same Victim and the same Priest, Jesus Christ our Lord. As a holy father says: 'Yes, He weeps, He cries, to appease Heaven; He sheds tears of blood over the sins of the world, and to obtain pardon for sinners. Will He succeed in touching your soul, in converting some of His executioners? Yes, if you pray with Him, by Him, and in Him, you will obtain all graces.'

We will terminate this meditation with a very touching observation: Jesus, who so often wept when on earth, could not see others weep. His Heart was so kind and feeling that the sight of tears troubled Him, and never were they shed in His presence without His drying these tears and crying out with emotion, 'O, weep not!'

He first said these words on entering the house of Jaïrus, where they were weeping at the death of a young girl, 'Weep not' (Luke viii. 52); and immediately comforted her father, and all those who were bewailing her death, by restoring her to life.

On another occasion, at Naim, He said the same words to a poor widow who was following her only son to the grave. He heard her groans from afar, He saw her tears, and moved with compassion, He said to her, 'Weep not' (Luke vii. 13); and to dry her tears and console her, He 'raised the son to life, and restored him to his mother.' And again, on the day of His passion and death, even on the very road to Calvary, when He heard sobs, and saw the tears of the daughters of Zion, who followed Him, He was so moved that He said to them, 'Do not weep' (Luke xxiii. 28). This was ever the first movement, the first cry of His Heart; never could He endure to see others weep, not even on account of His own sufferings; but He had tears of compassion to shed for the sorrows of the whole world. O ineffable goodness! O Heart infinitely meek and loving!

Beseech Jesus to grant you the grace to love Him, and the pardon of those sins which cost Him so many tears on Calvary. Can you not also express your love and sorrow for Him by abundant tears? This is a precious grace that He has granted to His saints, and you may ask it of Him to-day: intense sorrow and abundant weeping. 'Make me truly with Thee weep. O my God, give me great sorrow for my sins, and plenteous tears. Make me weep with thee, O Blessed Virgin, mother of love.'

TWELFTH DAY.

THE SIGHS OR CRIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS.

'Ex abundantia Cordis os loquitur.'
'Out of the abundance of the Heart the mouth speaketh' (Matt. xii. 34).

IF it is true that the sentiments of the heart are made known by the expression and by tears, it is equally so that the most secret feelings can be declared most fully by words. One single word has often sufficed to reveal the heart; and in the world's history there have been many such words, so celebrated that they have redounded to the glory or the shame of those who have uttered them. Open the Gospel; there the God of truth and love speaks to the soul. In a single verse of this Divine Testament you will find more light and virtue than in all the books of ancient and modern philosophy. The Heart of Jesus spoke, and the infinite charm of the words of the God-Man, the Incarnate Word, ravished and enchained the crowd of those who hung upon His lips to such a point that, unable to leave Him, they followed Him into the desert, and, in the rapture of listening to His words, forgot the rest and nourishment necessary to the material life of the body.

It would be impossible to quote all the beautiful words spoken by Jesus and inspired by His Heart; we shall, however, devote several days to this study,

the sweetest and most fruitful among all the meditations we have undertaken. We will commence with the sighs or cries of this Adorable Heart; we shall then see its effusions and most intimate confidences, even the revelation of its most mysterious secrets.

By sighs or cries from the heart we mean keen and penetrating words, rapid and ardent, which escape from the depths of the soul like darts, discovering all its devotion and tenderness. We will quote only a few of these words, simply following the order in which we find them.

I. 'Peace!' True, the Infant Jesus did not pronounce this word at His birth, but it was taken by the angels from His Heart, and spoken for Him on the mountain at Bethlehem. 'Peace!' Jesus promised and gave it on the first day of His mortal life. This great treaty, reconciling earth to heaven, was to be signed in His tears, and all the conditions of this alliance are expressed in the sacred chant of the Seraphin: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good-will.' If you give glory to God, you will be at peace with Him; but how are you to give God this glory? By good-will, by the holy desires of your heart.

'Peace!' Jesus gave it again before His death: 'My peace I give unto you.' He wished His disciples, on entering a house, to bestow the blessing of peace, and to say, 'Peace be to this house' (Luke x. 5). Again, on rising from the tomb,

His first word to the disciples was, 'Peace be with you.' This word was sufficient to enable them to recognise Him, for it was His habitual salutation to His friends. It sufficed to reveal the Heart of a God, who alone was able to fathom the abysses of the human soul, and enrich them by His grace and the gift of His eternal peace.

II. 'Blessed!' The second *cry* from the Heart of Jesus responds perhaps more fully to all the aspirations of our souls. Happiness! Is it not sought, wished for, asked for, and hoped for by all? But it had been sought, wished for, asked for, and hoped for in vain, until Jesus, opening His mouth for the first time, promised and bestowed it. 'Blessed!' What a word! But for whom is this happiness? For all, even the most unhappy—those who suffer and weep. We will speak later of this celebrated Sermon on the Mount, when we shall see that it is a different sort of revelation of the Heart of Jesus, which we shall name an *Effusion*. At present we shall limit our considerations to the sighs or cries of this Divine Heart. We assert that this word 'blessed' is one of the most sublime and tender of them, and that the Heart of a God alone could have pronounced this word of love and consolation; above all, with the explanation He gave of it when, with a look towards heaven, He said, 'Blessed! . . . for theirs is the kingdom of heaven . . . Blessed! . . . for they shall be comforted' (Matt. v. 3, 5). Only a God could thus have commenced His mission on earth of love and mercy.

III. 'Come to Me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you' (Matt. xi. 28). 'O ye, who are in trouble, whose soul is oppressed, come, and I will comfort you.' This is, perhaps, the most beautiful, tender, and divine of all the cries of the Heart of Jesus. The others were like a ray of hope which shone in the darkness of the night; but this is a promise of consolation, peace, and happiness addressed to all who suffer: 'Come to Me, all ye.' Compare these words to any that have ever been pronounced by men, to celebrated words which have been repeated for centuries in histories of the world, and you will soon observe the difference; you will admire the divine character of this invitation, and recognise the Heart of God. Our God has ever had in His Heart this feeling of pity and compassion for men, who are His children, and whose brother He became in the mystery of the Incarnation. From heaven He looked down upon suffering humanity, and said to all, 'Come unto Me.' Then He came down to us, and dwelt among us; then it was that He said to us by His tears, 'Come ye all unto Me.' And last of all, He died on the Cross of Calvary, embracing the whole world in His last look, and saying, in that strong cry which He uttered in death, 'Come ye all unto Me.'

And in fact all who heard that cry, and believed in His word, have been comforted; for it is not a vain promise or a deceitful hope: 'I will refresh you.' He gave light and peace to their hearts and

minds. His friends and disciples publish loudly, and repeat incessantly, this promise; they have been comforted and happy even in the midst of trials and tears, and have rejoiced; whilst those who would not believe on Him, or come to Him, remain in darkness and trouble; they are dead, having no hope.

See on Calvary two men crucified with Jesus, and dying near Him. He stretches out His hands, and says to both of them, 'Come unto Me.' These two men represent the entire human race. One heard the voice of Jesus, believed on Him, and died in hope, looking to that heaven which he was about to enter; the other, like the wicked, would not believe—he did not come down from the cross, but died upon it, writhing in despair, and with blasphemies on his lips.

IV. 'I have compassion on them'—this crowd that had followed Him into the desert, whose hunger He satisfied with miraculous bread—'I have compassion!' It is the same thought and sentiment, therefore we shall not dwell long upon it. Still, we must remark the beauty of the words. How sublime and divine this cry of a compassionate Heart appears to us! Each one may imagine it addressed to himself in particular. You often say to God, 'Have pity on me, have compassion on my soul.' The Heart of Jesus answers, 'Yes, I have compassion on thee.'

V. and VI. 'My Father, forgive!' and 'I thirst!' We unite these two words here, though the thought

may appear very different. The first is a cry of grace and compassion for His murderers and all His enemies ; the other, a loving plaint, a groan, addressed to the hearts of the indifferent, and even to His friends. Pardon, love ! We join these words thus at the conclusion of this exercise, because they seem to us to embrace the whole spirit of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. As we have already said, it is a devotion of reparation and tears, and at the same time a devotion of love.

Believe that you often hear these words from the Heart of Jesus on our altars, or hidden in the tabernacle. As upon the Cross and at the moment of His death, He thence says ever to His Father : 'Pardon, O My Father, pardon for so much indifference, for such outrages and scorn !' Whilst to us, His friends, His children, He complains and repeats, 'I thirst !' Yes, He thirsts to find souls who thirst for Him and for His love ; He thirsts to be loved ; He thirsts to be thirsted for.

When Magdalen at the foot of the Cross heard this cry from her beloved Saviour and Master, her tears fell more abundantly, and gladly would she have moistened the parched lips of her dying God with her tears, to quench the burning thirst which consumed Him ; but this consolation was denied her. Jesus, who saw the thoughts of her heart, and the tenderness of her compassion, was touched, and gave her a last look full of compassion and gratitude. It is thus that the Divine

Master will respond to the holy desires of your soul, if you strive to enter into the true sentiments of this devotion. Ask Him to forgive all your ingratitudes, which so afflict His Divine Heart in this mystery. 'Father, forgive!' Then, not content with consecrating your heart to Him, tell Him often during the course of this day that you wish you had the hearts of all men to give Him, and to love Him! 'I thirst!' This thirst for souls is infinitely pleasing to Him, and this zeal will console His Heart for the indifference of men.

Recite, with all the fervour of which you are capable, the acts of reparation and consecration to this Divine Heart. Repeat these prayers slowly; let Jesus have time to speak to you, and in the silence of your soul you will hear those sweet words, 'Peace! Come unto Me!' Yes, peace and happiness! 'Come, and I will have mercy upon thee. Love Me, even as I love thee. I have compassion! I thirst!'

THIRTEENTH DAY.

EFFUSIONS OF THE HEART OF JESUS.

His First Discourse.

'Ex abundantia Cordis os loquitur.'

'Out of the abundance of the Heart the mouth speaketh' (Matt. xii. 34).

'Et loquebatur illis de regno Dei.'

'And He spoke to them of the kingdom of God' (Luke ix. 11).

OUR Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ came down upon this earth to glorify His Heavenly Father and save mankind; this was the one wish and aim of His mortal life, the end of all His labours, the term of His travail and sufferings. This sentiment filled His Divine Heart; and as, in all His discourses, He spoke out of the abundance of His Adorable Heart, the kingdom of God—that is to say, the mysteries of heaven—formed the subject of these discourses, by which He sought to make His Father loved and known, and to establish His kingdom in the souls of men. In the last year of His life on earth He gave a public mission in the Temple of Jerusalem. There, says the holy Evangelist, He preached daily (Luke xix. 47). And He was teaching daily in the Temple, to convert this unfaithful and ungrateful people; but the historians of His life have given us no analysis of these sacred discourses, in which, no doubt, His Heart was fully and constantly made known,

teaching men to love God and their neighbour, for we are told that He explained the whole law with divine authority.

That we may study and better understand His Heart, we will meditate upon the most renowned discourses of Jesus Christ given us in the Holy Scriptures. The Sermon on the Mount, some of the parables, and (the most beautiful of all His discourses) that at the Last Supper will form the subject of these most important meditations.

The Sermon on the Mount consists of three admirable divisions: I. The beatitudes. II. The perfection of the law of Christ. III. The revelation of the prayer, or the *Pater*. We shall see that all this is from the Heart of Jesus, out of the very abundance of this Divine Heart.

I. The beatitudes.—Let us begin by recalling all of them, and may these words from the lips of Jesus remain always engraved on your hearts! 'Jesus, then, seeing the multitudes, went up into a mountain; and when He was sat down, His disciples came unto Him. And opening His mouth He taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace-

makers, for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake.'

What words are these, and what must have been the surprise of those who heard them ! Could there have been many in that crowd who understood this sublime language of a Divine Heart ? *Blessed !* At the first of these words the earth might well have trembled with love, and every heart have been filled with hope. *Blessed are the poor.* This must have caused surprise, and when the reason for this unknown happiness was made known to them, *For theirs is the kingdom of heaven*, doubtless all looked at one another, seeking an explanation of the mysterious words. But Jesus, continuing His discourse, pronounced a still more surprising sentence, *Blessed are they that mourn*, &c., again adding the hope of eternal happiness and celestial blessedness, the only consolation in the sorrows of life.

This promise given to the heart of man proves that these words are direct from the Heart of a God ; and one cannot sufficiently admire, nor too frequently repeat, this sentence, inspired by the *Genius of Christianity*. 'The religion which makes hope a virtue must necessarily be a divine religion ;' for this word, hope, alone responds to all the aspirations of the human heart, which demands not

only happiness, but eternal happiness. As this cannot be found on earth, where a vain shadow and a deceptive counterfeit only exist, the human heart finds itself doomed to live, or rather to die, without this hope, until Jesus gives us hope, in one single word, *Blessed*, for they shall be comforted.

In considering these beatitudes, it is necessary to admire the order and connection of these sacred verities, to compare one with the other, and observe that Jesus began to enlighten us by the example of these divine and supernatural virtues before giving His ineffable teachings and sublime promises to the world.

II. The perfection of His laws.—Jesus next enters into an exposition of His sacred precepts. He promulgates the sacred law of a perfect love until then unknown upon earth. The Heart of a God speaks to the heart of men, to prove the superiority of His commandments over the law given on Sinai, graven on stone; He contrasts the very text of the Decalogue with the new precepts He is about to teach: 'You have heard that it was said to them of old, Thou shalt not kill; but I say to you, Do good to them that hate you and that persecute you. It was said to them of old, Thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say unto you, Tremble, lest a single glance should rouse an impure thought in your soul, for then you would be guilty in My sight.'

Then follow the divine precepts of charity: 'Give to him that asketh of thee; but when thou

doest alms, let it not be seen of men. When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth. Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth, where the rust and moth consume, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven. For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also.' We cannot refrain from transcribing the whole of this discourse, every word of which reveals the Heart of a God, the immense love of Jesus for the glory of His Heavenly Father, and for the happiness of mankind, whom He calls His brethren.

Can we not, in interpreting the text of this law of love, prove that it contains the germ of those divine counsels which Jesus reserved to Himself, intending to bestow them on us later on? If you meditate carefully on the words of the Divine Master, you will find, both at the opening and conclusion of this first discourse, the thought of that perfection exemplified in Himself, I mean the germ of the virtues of poverty, chastity, obedience, humility, and abnegation; heavenly virtues whose very names were unknown before He came down from heaven to teach them.

In a word, all these sacred teachings are from God, speaking, as He Himself said, out of the abundance of His Heart, so that these promises of happiness, this law of love, only expressed and revealed His Divine Heart.

III. The third part of this sublime discourse will convince us more perfectly of this truth. It

is a lesson in prayer. Prayer is the raising of the heart to God, a cry from earth to heaven, a homage, a sigh, a look inspired by love or gratitude. Thus therefore shall you pray: 'Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name' (Matt. vi. 9). Every one knows this prayer. You have long been in the habit of reciting it; but have you ever deeply meditated on its divine words? Have you understood this sublime prayer, in which the Heart of Jesus is wholly given to you by the revelation of its two sentiments of love towards God and man? Everything is comprised in this prayer. Endeavour to-day to recite it in the second manner of the exercises of St. Ignatius, that is to say, reflecting on each word in your heart, thoroughly appreciating every request contained in both parts of this divine supplication. You will then see that the Heart of a God alone could have taught us thus to address Him, 'Our Father.'

It is not my intention here to make even a short and simple paraphrase of the 'Our Father,' as there are already many of them. I would only ask the pious reader to say the Lord's Prayer attentively, and he will soon comprehend what it would take us too long to prove in this exercise; that this prayer came from heaven; and that all its inspired words, coming from the Heart of Jesus, reveal the most intimate sentiments of love for His Father and for us.

With what confidence and love we ought, then, to say this prayer! God cannot refuse to grant

those graces we pray for, when we make use of the very form of prayer to touch His Heart which His own Son vouchsafed to teach us. O prodigy of goodness! Not only has He promised and sworn to grant us all we ask in His Name, but He has given us the words of supplication and taught us the prayer by which to address Him; and yet we fear, we hesitate. Ah, we may be sure that when our prayers are unavailing, and we obtain nothing, it is because we lack faith, for God cannot fail in His promises. You will conclude this meditation by saying the Lord's Prayer three times, offering it by the Heart of Jesus who revealed it to us, that we may obtain grace to understand His words, and faithfully love and practise His divine laws.

FOURTEENTH DAY.

EFFUSIONS OF THE HEART OF JESUS (*continued*).

Two Parables.

'Ex abundantia Cordis os loquitur.'

'For out of the abundance of the Heart the mouth speaketh' (Matt. xii. 34).

'Et sine parabolis non loquebatur.'

'And without parables He did not speak to them' (Matt. xiii. 34).

JESUS CHRIST, the God of Truth and Love, always spoke with simplicity, and often, as the Gospel shows, in parables. He loved to reveal the great mysteries of the kingdom of God under the simple form of comparisons, or popular narrations, suited to the comprehension of all. This peculiar characteristic of His divine mission had been predicted by His prophets: 'I will open My mouth in parables' (Ps. lxxvii. 2).

It will be impossible here for us to study each separate parable of the Divine Master. We will choose two, which will give light and grace to us as we meditate upon them, for we shall find therein the revelation of the tenderness of the Heart of Jesus for the faithful souls who love Him, as well as the revelation of His infinite mercies towards those who abandon and outrage Him. We will proceed to consider, first, the parable of the Good Shepherd; and secondly, that of the Prodigal Son.

I. 'I am the Good Shepherd' (John x. 11). It would seem as if our Lord Jesus Christ could not find words sufficiently expressive of His great love for us. He has, as it were, exhausted every title and expression to prove to us how much love He bears in His Heart towards us. He is a friend, a brother; again, He is a father, and what a father! Nay, more, a mother might forget her child, but He—never. Here He is the Good Shepherd, good to the faithful sheep, good above all to those that are unfaithful, and consequently unhappy. We must keep these two thoughts in our minds during this meditation.

1. He is good to the faithful sheep. The Good Shepherd knows them all; He loves, protects, and feeds them.

'I *know* them,' He says (John x. 14); 'and they know My voice, and follow Me' (John x. 25). Jesus Christ says He calls them by name, and one of His prophets says that this name is written in His hands and on His Heart. He *loves* them tenderly; His delight is to be in the midst of this beloved flock, and His greatest joy is to do them good. 'I will rejoice over them when I shall do them good, with My whole Heart, and with all My soul' (Jer. xxxii. 41). It is the most ardent desire of His Heart. He visits them with solicitude and love. 'I Myself will seek My sheep, and will visit them' (Ezech. xxxiv. 11). He loves them even to giving His life for them. 'And I lay down My life for My sheep' (John x. 15).

He *protects* and defends them from the wolf, and against every danger. Whilst the hireling takes flight, the Good Shepherd watches and saves His flock, for all the sheep are His own. He confides the care of them to His Pontiffs and priests, but they are ever His own sheep and lambs. He says to Peter, 'Feed *My* sheep, feed *My* lambs.' He alone can give the right to enter His fold, and confer the grace of conducting the flock into the pastures of Truth. 'I am the door of the sheep; he shall go in and go out, and find pastures' (John x. 7, 9).

He *nourishes* them, not only by leading them into green pastures, but feeds them with His own hand, and shows them a thousand signs of His affection; nay, even feeds them with His adorable flesh and blood. He daily sheds His blood upon the sacred stones of our altars, in the chalice of the holy mysteries, that same blood which He shed for us on the Cross: He gives it to His sheep to drink, that they may be purified, and that the life He sacrifices continually for them may be communicated to them. 'I lay down My life for My sheep' (ibid. 15).

2. What would this Good Shepherd, who is so kind to the faithful sheep, do, if one of them should abandon Him, and leaving the green pastures, and, refusing to hear His voice, should stray away, and finally be lost? Ah, then it is that this Good Shepherd's Heart is revealed to us! No sooner does He miss one of the sheep than, uneasy

and alarmed, He hastens to seek it, lest it fall a prey to cruel wolves, or should die of hunger in the deserts, and, leaving ninety-nine faithful sheep, goes to seek the one that is lost. He calls it, and finds it at last, wounded and bleeding, amongst the briers and thorns.

In this vivid picture you will recognise the Heart of Jesus. This Good Shepherd not only never threatens or strikes the fugitive sheep with His crook, but He carefully removes the thorns which entangle and wound it; having then gently withdrawn it, He takes it up in His arms, presses it to His Heart, and carries it triumphantly home to His fold. 'He lays it upon His shoulders rejoicing' (Luke xv. 5). Contemplate this sweet picture of the Good Shepherd, and enter into the Heart of Jesus, who rejoices with His angels when He finds this lost sheep, and rescues it from death. 'I will give them a Heart, and they shall understand.' Yes, in the end we shall understand, and shall love Him!

II. The parable of the Prodigal Son. It was my intention to quote here this most beautiful narrative from the Gospel without altering one word, and to ask the reader silently to meditate on this revelation of the Heart of Jesus. But as this Sacred Book is open to every one, it will be sufficient to point out the chapter in which this touching history is to be found, viz. the fifteenth of St. Luke, immediately following the parable of the Good Shepherd. It seems impossible for the

most hardened or indifferent sinner to read it without tears. There he will see the history of his own miseries, and a picture of divine mercy.

We shall only consider the latter of these two thoughts; and we shall see that the heart of this unhappy son's father burst forth and revealed all its tenderness in three principal circumstances—on the day of his son's departure, during his long absence, but chiefly on the day of his return home.

1. First, then, at the moment of his departure. The unhappy father looked on his son with love and sorrow. You may see his tears, and hear his sighs and cries; we have already said it was the language of the heart.

But the prodigal did not return to his father until he had squandered all his treasures and his rich inheritance. No doubt you will understand the meaning of these sacred words, and will remember the voice of God which made itself heard in your soul when you abandoned Him. The first cry of remorse is the complaint of God, the unspeakable groaning of the Holy Spirit of love whom you have grieved. Alas, has not this voice spoken in vain? Have you not acted like the prodigal, who fled far away lest he should be reminded of his father, or hear of his benefits? 'Into a far country' (Luke xv. 13).

2. During that long and cruel absence, the love and tenderness of the father of this ungrateful son —I mean the loving mercy of God for the sinner—were manifested in a yet more touching manner.

After the delirious follies of his first estrangements, and the intoxication of guilty pleasures, he caused this prodigal to feel the sorrows of this voluntary exile in his soul, and to suffer a frightful want and devouring hunger of the heart. 'And he began to be in want' (Luke xv. 14). He it was who made this unhappy son feel all the shame of the bondage and tyranny of the passions which enslaved him. He showed him the abyss of degradation and depravity into which he had precipitated himself, when he was constrained to wish for the loathsome food eaten by the swine, but which he was unable to obtain. 'And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him' (Luke xv. 16). What a profound mystery is the abyss of the human heart, which, when far from God, sinks so low as to wish for the husks that swine eat; that is to say, it wishes to be like the beasts that perish, without remorse, without a soul, without eternity! But this desire is unavailing; none gave unto him. You understand this; and, alas, how many such unhappy sinners ask for, and seek everywhere, this loathsome food, even in the most infamous literature! 'And no man gave unto him.' Vain was the search, useless the wish. They know and feel that they have a soul, and that eternity awaits them.

But the father did not abandon his son: he followed him with anxious and uneasy looks; he called him with sorrowful cries. This voice

sounded sometimes in the ungrateful heart of this guilty and unhappy child; this was the voice of remorse, so powerful when heard in affliction. Tears have brought many sinners to God, and this is one of the most touching proofs of God's love. If you suffer, God loves you still. St. Augustine says, 'I should fear to meet with a happy sinner; it seems to me that God Himself could have no hope of his salvation.'

3. Finally, the love of the father for this prodigal son was most strongly shown at his return home. Then it was that the father's heart manifested itself by sighs and tears, by transports of joy. This was the occasion for which he had so long waited. The unhappy son had no sooner said in his heart, 'I will arise,' than his father heard him. Scarcely had he begun to set out on his homeward journey than his father saw him. 'And running to him, fell upon his neck' (Luke ibid.), embraced him tenderly, and strained him to his heart; even before the sinner could utter a word of repentance, he wept over and forgave him. This is the language of the Heart of a God, the language of a most tender love, constant and generous. What transports of joy! What accents of happiness! How magnificent the feast with which this return, so ardently desired, is celebrated with all his friends! He ceases not to say, with tears of joy, 'This my son was dead, and is come to life again; he was lost, and is found' (Luke xv. 24).

It is by these touching words that this good father explains the excess of his joy to his other son, who, jealous of the favours heaped upon the guilty fugitive, dared to complain bitterly, saying that so much had never been done for him, who had always been faithful, and had always remained under the paternal roof. The father excuses himself, as it were; asks how it is possible not to rejoice when his child, whom he had thought lost, was found again,—dead, and had come to life again. Like the Good Shepherd, he rejoiced to find his unfaithful sheep, to seek and save whom he had left all the rest in the wilderness.

We must not, however, conclude the study of this parable without mentioning what the Heart of God says with regard to those of His children who are faithful to His love, and how He proves His goodness to them also. When the elder son complained with bitterness and envy, his father said to him, 'Be not angry, dear son. I love you also; you are ever with me, and all that I have is yours. It was fit that we should rejoice at finding your brother again. All I have is thine' (Luke xv. 31). 'All is yours, my tenderness, my love, my house, my riches, my heart, my life, my all.' Here is true and unreserved love. 'All I have is thine.' This cry comes from the heart, and in this touching effusion of love the Divine Heart is fully and clearly revealed to us.

You will conclude this exercise by a fervent prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, imploring

the conversion of a prodigal son—in other words, of some hardened and unhappy sinner; and should this book fall into the hands of such a one, when you read this page, rise and return to your father, weep at his feet, hope for pardon, console the Heart of Jesus, and give joy to the angels by your conversion. 'Father, I have sinned;' this is a good act of contrition.

FIFTEENTH DAY.

EFFUSIONS OF THE HEART OF JESUS (*continued*).

The Discourse at the Supper.

'Ex abundantia Cordis os loquitur.'

'Out of the abundance of the Heart the mouth speaketh' (Matt. xii. 34).

'Cum dilexisset suos, in finem dilexit eos.'

'Having loved His own, He loved them to the end' (John xiii. 1).

THE beloved Apostle St. John commences the beautiful chapters of his Gospel with these words, in which we find this most touching of all His discourses, that at the Supper. Surely it was fitting that this disciple, whose head rested on the Heart of Jesus, as if to draw thence all the secrets of His love, should have been chosen to reveal to us its sweetest effusions.

Here, again, we must quote the whole discourse, and meditate on every word in the silence of our soul; for each word has been inspired by the tenderest affection, and has emanated from the Heart of Jesus. It is the Testament of His love, and the last expression of the sentiments of His Adorable Heart.

The discourse appears to embrace three principal parts: I. Consolations; II. Advice or Counsels; and III. Promises.

I. The Consolations.—Jesus knew that His hour was come, that He was soon to die, and thinking of the deep grief of His beloved disciples, wishing also to forewarn them of the scandal of His Passion and death, He commences this celebrated discourse by words which reveal at the same time the tenderness of His Heart, and His grief at being separated from His friends. 'Let not your heart be troubled. I will not leave you orphans' (John xiv. 1, 18). A father at the point of death, seeing his children weeping around him, could say nothing more tender or consoling than these words, 'Be not troubled, my children; it is true I am about to leave you, and you will see me no more. I shall be no longer here to speak to you. But listen to my last words; let them be written on your hearts. You will not be orphans, for by the memory of my love I shall be ever with you. I leave my heart as a gift to you.'

'Let not your heart be troubled.' At the close of His discourse He explains to His disciples that

it is His peace He leaves with them—a peace such as the world neither knows nor gives, and which nothing can disturb or take away. This peace is the consolation and strength of those whom He loves ; it is their inheritance and most precious treasure. At His birth He promised it to the world ; but at His death He gave it to His friends.

'Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. The hour approaches when all shall be accomplished that the prophets have foretold of the Son of Man : He will be scourged, crucified, and put to death ; but remember all I have said to you, keep My peace in your heart, and let nothing trouble you.

'No ; I will not leave you orphans ; I will be always with you ; nothing can ever separate Me from those I love, and if you love Me I will dwell in you. I will be with you for ever.'

'I will not leave you orphans.' Whether these words were spoken after the Eucharistic Supper, as most of the doctors of the Church think, or whether they were uttered just before the institution of this mystery, they must have been readily understood by the disciples. Jesus did not actually leave them ; His Heart discovered the secret of dying for those He loved, and yet remaining with them ; the secret of living and dying for ever out of His love for them. He loved them to the end. 'I will not leave you.'

II. The last wishes of Jesus form the chief

substance of this admirable discourse. One might say that these divine counsels are comprised in the double precept of prayer and charity.

To exhort them more urgently to the practice of the sacred duty of prayer, He solemnly promises that His Father will grant every request made in His name. 'Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, *that will I do*' (John, ibid.). He then mildly reproaches them with having hitherto asked nothing in His name : 'Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full' (John xvi. 24). Does not the Heart of a God speak here? That they may know!

But it is above all in the exposition of the law of love that the Heart of Jesus Christ is revealed to us. Never before had He explained this commandment in so touching a manner. He begins with brotherly love. 'This is My commandment, that ye love one another' (John xv. 12). He repeats this precept several times, almost in the same terms, to engrave them on their hearts. 'These things I command you, that ye love one another' (John, ibid.). He then explains to them how they are to prove that this love dwells in their hearts : they are to have the same sentiments, to be of one heart and mind. And if necessary they are to give even a stronger proof of this charity, by dying for one another. 'Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends' (ibid. 13).

Shortly after the exposition and promulgation of

this sacred law, His loving Heart is troubled, and He offers up a fervent prayer to His Heavenly Father: 'O My Father,' He says, 'Holy Father, I pray for them, that they all may be one; that they may be one, as We also are' (John xvii. 11). 'I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one.' This sublime prayer forms the peroration of this discourse, and we could not quote less than the whole of it, for every word of it contains a revelation of this Divine Heart, the most tender and loving of all hearts.

In equally touching terms Jesus speaks of the love of God. 'Abide,' He says, 'persevere in My love' (John xv. 9). 'If any one love Me, My Father will love him, and We will dwell in him.' Wondrous words, which He repeats thrice in this discourse, that His disciples may never be able to forget them.

What proof does He require of this charity? 'If you keep My commandments, you shall abide in My love' (ibid.). Again what language! The Heart alone speaks here, the Heart of a God sighing only for the glory of His Father and the salvation of mankind. Yes, we shall understand and love this Heart!

III. The promises of Jesus Christ made before His death, and at the moment of taking His final leave of His Apostles, afford a no less striking proof of His love for us. These promises of a faithful Heart will ever prove the strength and joy of all to whom they are made, that is to say, to His disciples

and all the inheritors of their faith and love. Meditate specially upon that promise which Jesus gave to His disciples, that He would send down His Holy Spirit upon them, to teach them all truth.

'And He shall glorify Me' (John xvi. 14). 'It is expedient to you that I go; for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.' Could He possibly have said any sweeter or more consoling words to the friends He was about to leave? The Apostles did not forget this promise, and even after the death of Jesus and His glorious Ascension they kept it in their hearts. According to His promise He sent this Spirit of life and truth to them, by Whom they were filled, and by Whose power they triumphed in all the combats they had to endure for the glory of their good Master. He Himself foretold these struggles and persecutions, promising at the same time to give them strength and victory. 'You shall weep, and have sorrow,' He said; 'but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you' (ibid.). 'I will not now call you servants, but I have called you friends' (John xv. 15).

Towards the close of this discourse, Jesus, in the outpouring of His Divine Heart, compares Himself to a fruitful vine, and His disciples to the branches (ibid.). 'It is the trunk that gives life to the branches: so if you dwell in Me, and I in

you, I will be your life, and you shall bear fruit. On the contrary, if you are separated from Me, you would not have life, you could not bear fruit; but I will remain with you and dwell with you, I will be your life. Be not therefore troubled; fear not, little flock. My dear children, have confidence. Like Me you will have to suffer, and be persecuted; you will be ill-treated; but have confidence. I will be with you; I will not forsake you; I will not leave you orphans; and your sadness shall be changed into joy. I have overcome the world—I, your God, your Friend, your Father. Have confidence; I have overcome the world' (John xvi. 33). 'Courage and confidence; you shall also overcome in My name.' Meditate on all these words: what a law! what touching farewells! what grand promises! what immense love! Yes, truly the Heart of a Father and Friend speaks here, the Heart of God Himself.

You will conclude this exercise by a colloquy with Jesus Christ, asking Him for grace to understand these divine words, and keep them faithfully for ever in a generous heart.

SIXTEENTH DAY.

THE WORDS OF JESUS TO THE BLESSED MARGARET MARY.

1. *The Secret of His Love and Sorrows.*

'Ex abundantia Cordis os loquitur.'

'Out of the abundance of the Heart the mouth speaketh' (Matt. xii. 34).

'Eructavit Cor meum verbum bonum.'

'My Heart hath uttered a good word' (Ps. xliv. 2).

ALL the words upon which we have meditated up to this day have been taken from the Holy Scriptures, and principally from the Gospel. These proofs of divine love belong to all time, to all men; but there have been other words from the Heart of Jesus. This good Master, as it were, only began to show it to us. It is time that we should relate how He gave us His Heart, and how in these latter days He has filled up the measure of His infinite love by the words which have fallen from His Heart. Thus alone has our Saviour Jesus Christ revealed all the secrets of His Adorable Heart.

We shall not be able in this meditation to recount in detail the marvellous and touching fact of the apparition of Jesus to the Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque, religious of the Visitation, at Paray-le-Monial. The words of Jesus Christ to this holy soul, independently even of the authority given to them by the decrees of beatification, and

by the juridical examen of her writings, have such a character of truth and celestial authenticity impressed upon them that the Christian soul cannot fail immediately to recognise them. In fact, it could never have entered into the human mind, nor into any imagination, however exalted, to invent these hidden things and to speak such words of mystery.

According to our custom, we shall select the principal words for our meditations. Arranging them in order, we shall find in these effusions of the Heart of Jesus to His faithful spouse the positive revelation of the great secrets of this beautiful devotion; for to her it was that He confided His sorrows, His desires, and at the same time the glorious promises of His love. This will form the subject of our meditations for the three last days of this Novena.

Let us, in the first place, examine the secret of the sufferings of the Heart of Jesus, which we should rouse ourselves to console. He began by manifesting the cause of these sorrows, namely, the ingratitude of men, the grief of not being loved; and this pain is infinite, because His love for us has no limits. He loved unto the end. But let us be silent whilst the Divine Saviour speaks; let us strive to hear and taste these words, for in them He truly gives us His Heart, that we may understand.

He tells us how great is His love for us. 'My Divine Heart,' He said to Blessed Margaret Mary,

'is so impassioned with love for men that it cannot contain the flames of love that burn within it, but must shed them abroad and manifest them to men, to enrich them with these precious treasures.'*

On one occasion, the Blessed Sacrament being exposed, she received a most marvellous grace, which she relates as follows: 'Jesus Christ, my good Master, appeared to me shining in glory, the five wounds brilliant like so many suns. Flames burst forth from His sacred Body in every part, but especially from His adorable breast, which resembled a furnace, and on opening it He discovered His Divine Heart to me, the living source of these flames. Then it was that He made known to me the inexplicable wonders of His purest love, and the excess of His love for men, from whom He only received ingratitude. "*I am more sensible of this*," He said to me, "*than of all else that I suffered in My Passion. If they made Me any return for My love, I should esteem as nothing all I have done for them; and if it were possible, I would suffer more. But all My eagerness to do them good meets with coldness and rebuffs. Do thou at least atone for their ingratitude as much as it lies in thy power.*"'

* All the extracts we shall make in these three meditations are taken from the *Life and Works of the Blessed Margaret Mary*, also from her Life written by herself; and we give the words of the text without any alteration whatever.

In this revelation of the love of Jesus we see the extreme desire He had that men should love Him, and how greatly their want of love pained Him. And what was He about to do, that He might overcome their hearts and gain their love? He tells His spouse that He will give His Heart. Read, and meditate on what follows :

'On the day of St. John the Evangelist, after having received a grace from my Divine Saviour similar to that which the beloved disciple received on the evening of the Supper, the Divine Heart was represented to me as upon a throne of fire and flames, emitting rays on all sides more brilliant than the sun, and as transparent as crystal. The wound given upon the Cross was clearly visible. Around this Divine Heart was a crown of thorns, and above it a cross. My Divine Master made me understand that these instruments of His Passion signified that the immense love He had for men had been the source of all His sufferings ; that from the first moment of His Incarnation all His torments had been present to Him, and the Cross had been, so to say, planted from that moment in His Heart ; that He accepted then all the pains and humiliations which would be endured by His Sacred Humanity, which He would have to suffer during the course of His mortal life, and even the outrages to which He was exposed in the Blessed Sacrament through His love for men.

'Then it was He made me understand that His ardent wish to be loved by men caused Him to

manifest His Heart to them, and to give this last proof of His love in these latter days.'

All the sacred words of this revelation are but a prelude to a yet more mysterious grace, crowning so many favours, which we shall shortly relate. We will make a remark here which applies to the whole of this subject, namely, that love is the source of all the sufferings of Jesus Christ. He suffered and died because He loved us; and in His mystic life His Heart suffers because of His love, and because He is not loved. This has been well understood and expressed by the saints, especially by St. Augustine and St. Teresa; but above all by that sweet Sister Margaret Mary to whom Jesus revealed the profoundest secrets of His love and sorrows.

It is most essential that we should ask our Lord to give us grace to love Him, if we are still unable to understand the language of these pure and fervent souls. St. Augustine said, 'Without love it is impossible to attain a relish for these things.' *Da mihi amantem, et sentiet quod dico,*—'Give me a loving soul, he will understand what I say.' How often since we commenced this work have we asked this grace of God for the pious reader, and for ourselves also! But we feel the necessity of repeating this prayer, especially now that we are about to enter upon the most sublime and mysterious of these beautiful revelations.

We can but quote a few words, which will prove to us the love and sorrow of Jesus, reserving for

another day those which manifest His inmost desires and promises.

'Being before the Blessed Sacrament one day during the Octave,' says this pious soul, 'I received unusual graces of love from my God. And feeling touched with a desire to make some return, and to render love for love, He said to me, "*Thou canst make Me no greater return than by doing that which I have so often asked of thee;*" and showing me His Divine Heart, said, "Behold this Heart, which has so loved mankind that it has spared nothing, even to exhaust and consume itself, to manifest its love to them. In return I receive from the greater number only ingratitudes, contempt, irreverence, sacrileges, and coldness in this Sacrament of My love. Therefore I ask of thee,"' &c.

These are the sacramental words on this subject, if we may be permitted so to express it—words which we cannot repeat too often in this book, or meditate upon sufficiently; but to understand and interpret them thoroughly, we must have seen Jesus and His Sacred Heart, as this saint did, and like her we must have heard His voice!

For this reason it is impossible, even for the most religious artist, to portray Jesus speaking these words to His beloved spouse. She, and no other, could describe to us the sorrow and love depicted on His countenance, and more than all, His expression and the tones of His voice. Flames must have been in His eyes, and tears also.

He loves, and He suffers ; behold the whole secret and sentiment of this Divine Heart. But who can fathom these mysteries, this excess of love ? Above all, who can translate them into any language, or represent them ? When Paul came back from the heaven to which he had been transported, it seems as if he could have spoken of the wonders he had seen, or at least have revealed some of the words he had heard. But no, this was impossible. In all earth's language there was nothing to express this happiness, or to give the slightest idea of it ; he could not speak of it ; he would not have been understood. It is precisely the same with regard to the sentiments of the infinite love of Jesus and the immense sorrows of His soul. The saint to whom Jesus spoke, and to whom He manifested His Heart and revealed His secrets, has endeavoured to tell us something of this profound mystery ; but to hear this divine language, and taste these ineffable things, one must have loved as she did.

We will not stay to comment upon these sacred words ; we ask the pious reader to read them again, and meditate on them. We wish, however, to draw attention to the concluding words of this revelation ; they must strike every serious mind who wishes to enter into the true sentiment of the devotion of the Sacred Heart. Jesus says, '*I only receive from the greater part of men ingratitude, contempt, irreverence, sacrileges, and coldness.*' Is it not astonishing that God should have

spoken in such gradation of terms? For we cannot suppose that these words came by chance upon the lips of Jesus Christ, nor from the inspired pen of the Blessed Margaret.

Jesus spoke out of the abundance of His Heart, and His beloved spouse did not forget the admirable order of these complaints and the expression of His sorrows: 'contempt, irreverence, sacrileges, coldness.' Do you understand now? He only gives His Heart, or speaks, that He may reveal these great sorrowful mysteries. For the most cruel sufferings of the Heart of Jesus are not caused by the *contempt* of strangers, who know Him not, nor by the *irreverences* of the impious who outrage Him, nor by the *sacrileges* of sinners who deliver Him to death in an impure heart, but by the *coldness* of those souls whom He has loaded with proofs of His tenderness, and whom He called to His love; the coldness and tepidity of His friends, His disciples, His priests, and His spouses.

Ah, this it is that causes Him to endure suffering, of which He most bitterly complains; for He adds, '*But what I feel most is, that these are hearts that have been consecrated to Me that use Me thus.*' And what more reasonable, and even natural? Would you not be more distressed by want of delicacy, by an act of forgetfulness, by a mark of indifference, on the part of a friend or a brother, than by the greatest outrage received from a stranger or an enemy? You will to-day

make reparation with the special intention of consoling the Heart of Jesus for the sorrow He has been caused by those who ought to love Him.

SEVENTEENTH DAY.

THE WORDS SPOKEN BY JESUS TO THE BLESSED MARGARET MARY.

2. *Secrets of the Desires of the Heart of Jesus.*

'Ex abundantia Cordis os loquitur.'

'Out of the abundance of the Heart the mouth speaketh' (Matt. xii. 34).

'De bono thesauro cordis sui profert bonum.'

'A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good' (Luke vi. 45).

'*The heart that sighs is not satisfied,*' is a very true, simple, and widely-known proverb. The heart sighs, in fact, because something is wanting to it. Even so the Heart of Jesus has never ceased to sigh, from the first moment of the Incarnation, until the present hour; and to the Blessed Margaret Mary He vouchsafed to reveal the cause of His sighs, and confide the secret of His deepest sorrows and most interior desires.

'The loving Heart of Jesus,' she says, 'is filled with an infinite longing to be known and loved by His creatures, in whom He wishes to establish His

kingdom, the source of all blessings, and to provide for all their wants.'

Jesus Christ did not altogether delay the revelation of this profound longing of His tender and loving Heart to the world; for in His Prayer to His Heavenly Father on our behalf, and in His utterances at the Supper, in His groans of agony, and above all in that cry on Calvary, 'I thirst!' we recognise the same sentiment as that revealed at this epoch. Still, it appears to us that this secret was never confided to any other person as it was to the Blessed Margaret Mary. He has, as it were, poured forth His Heart to her in these interviews and confidences; not only making known to her His wishes, but further showing her how she could respond to the most ardent wishes of His Heart, and give Him consolation. This will form the subject for a beautiful meditation, and our only difficulty will be to make a selection of these mysterious communications. Jesus thirsts to be loved; all is condensed into this celebrated expression of St. Augustine.

I. First, let us recount what Jesus did and said that He might be loved by His faithful spouse, and then how He urged her to work and suffer, that through her He might be loved by all hearts.

1. She relates that, finding herself one day, when before the altar, completely invested with the divine presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, He vouchsafed to reveal to her the wonders of His love, and the ineffable secrets

of His Heart, which had up to that time been hidden: '*He opened His Heart to me for the first time.*' And what did He say to her? '"*My Heart is so impassioned with love for men, and for thee in particular, that it cannot contain the flames which consume it. I have chosen thee,*" &c. Then He gave me His Heart.'

On another occasion, when before the Blessed Sacrament, Jesus discovered His Divine Heart to her, like a living source of flames, and always complaining of men's indifference. '"*They show Me only coldness and rebuffs;*" adding, "*but thou, give Me this happiness of atoning for their ingratitude as much as lies in thy power.*" And when I represented my powerlessness to Him, He replied to me, "*This will supply all thy deficiencies,*" and at the same time this Divine Heart opened; a burning flame issued from it, so ardent that I thought I should have been consumed by it, and I besought Him to have pity upon my weakness. "*I will be thy strength,*" He said; "*fear nothing, but be attentive to My voice, and do what I ask of thee. Thou shalt receive every first Friday of each month; and on every Thursday night until Friday I will make thee participate in that mortal sorrow which I willingly suffered in the Garden of Olives: this grief, which none will be able to understand, will cause thee a severer agony than that of death itself.*"' Inasmuch as there can be no love without suffering, Jesus continually pointed out His Cross to her, and one day gave it to her,

'saying lovingly to me, "*Receive thy Cross, which I give thee, My daughter, and place it in thy heart.*"'

But it was the day of the feast of St. John that her Divine Spouse granted her a yet greater favour, revealing in a more special manner the secret of His desires. For, after having received from the Saviour Jesus a similar grace to that which He conferred upon this beloved disciple on the day of the Supper, she saw the Divine Heart upon a throne of flames, with the Cross, the Thorns, and the Wound. '*Then He made me understand that His great desire to be loved of men had caused Him to manifest His Heart to them.* He also assured me that it would please Him to be honoured under the figure of a heart of flesh, a picture of which He wished to be exposed in public.

'But what caused me more suffering than all the pains I have spoken of was when this loving Heart was presented to me with these words: "*I ardently thirst to be loved by men; but scarcely do I find any who endeavours to quench My thirst by showing Me any return of love.*" From that day I was unable to contain the sentiments of ardent love I felt towards Jesus Christ. I sought every opportunity of making them known by my words,' &c.

The solemn apparition in the Octave of the Blessed Sacrament has already been spoken of, when that holy soul, touched with the desire of making a return of love to her loving Lord, suddenly saw Him, and heard the mysterious words we have quoted several times. 'And showing me

His Divine Heart, He said, "*Behold this Heart, which has loved men so much.*"'

2. As if not content with the love of His faithful spouse, He charges, entreats, and commands her to do her utmost to gain hearts to Him, and cause Him to be loved. '*It is for this I ask thee to dedicate the first Friday after the Octave of the Blessed Sacrament, to be a feast in honour of My Heart, by communicating on that day to make reparation for the indignities it has received whilst exposed on the altars,*' &c.

These words prove to us that, in thus loading His faithful spouse with favours, Jesus Christ had but one thought, one wish—that through her instrumentality His Divine Heart might be known, loved, and glorified. He often said to her, '*Do that which I have asked of thee so many times.*' 'But to whom, O Lord my God, dost Thou speak? To a mean creature, to a poor sinner, and You have so many generous souls to carry out Your design.' But the Saviour replied, '*Knowest thou not that I make use of the weakest; that it is upon the meek and humble of spirit that My power chiefly manifests itself, to the end that they may attribute nothing to themselves?*'

The saint herself asserts this in the most formal and positive manner, that she received these graces, and was under obedience to speak of them, only to the end that Jesus might be loved, and His Divine Heart glorified. 'My Saviour,' she says, 'made me know that the graces He bestowed

upon me were not so much for myself as for others; that I was only to say such words as He inspired me with, which would be accompanied by the unction of His grace, and would attract many hearts to His love.'

She entered at once with incredible zeal into the design of making all men know and love this Divine Heart. At first in the monastery at Paray, and subsequently with the young novices intrusted to her charge during many years. By her letters, burning with this sacred fire; and by the eagerness she manifested in spreading everywhere the pictures she caused to be engraved of the Sacred Heart, as it had been revealed to her by Jesus Christ. Also by printed prayers and books to extend this touching devotion.

II. This would be a fitting place to dwell upon the manner in which Jesus Christ desired that His Divine Heart should be glorified when He made known His special wishes and sorrows to the heart of His faithful spouse; but to pause upon these things, which she accomplished with so much zeal, would be to undertake a panegyric of the saint, and so depart from the simplicity of the subjects of our meditations.

I shall, then, limit myself to speak briefly of what she did to glorify the Heart of Jesus; this will show us also what He requires of us.

1. Jesus first expressed His desire that a feast in honour of His Sacred Heart should be instituted, and vouchsafed to fix the day upon which He wished

this feast to be celebrated in the Church, the Friday after the Octave of the Blessed Sacrament.

The saint never ceased to pray, to work, and to suffer, that she might have the happiness of seeing this feast instituted in the Church; and this joy was accorded her, for the feast was established and solemnised in several dioceses before her death. You also must do all in your power to celebrate this great feast with fervour, and communicate with love on this day, selected by Jesus Christ Himself. This will not prevent you from communicating on the second Sunday in July, or on any other day upon which the feast is solemnised in your diocese.

2. Jesus expressed His wish to see the representation of His Heart exposed to the view of all, that men might thereby be attracted to His love. The saint took every care to have this picture engraved, and to disseminate it. She wished all sinners could see it, that they might be converted, and the pious, that they might be inflamed with love. With her own blood she painted one of these pictures, and composed a beautiful prayer, or act of consecration, in which she gives herself to Jesus without reservation. You will imitate her, by respectfully keeping, and distributing as widely as you can, the pious pictures which are able to effect so much good.

3. The Divine Master required Communion on the first Friday of the month, and the practice of the holy hour. The Blessed Margaret Mary was

faithful to these commands; and you may be sure of graces and blessings if, on your part, you do all in your power to glorify your Saviour in the same way.

4. The saint prayed incessantly for the increase of this devotion to the Sacred Heart. Her letters are full of an active and ingenious zeal. She rejoices at finding books prepared, and in course of distribution, for this object. She is delighted to adorn with her novices, first a small oratory, and soon after, a chapel in honour of this Adorable Heart. In a word, all that can contribute to the glory of this devotion, anything that can spread the love and knowledge of this Divine Heart, alone occupies her thoughts and fills up the life of her soul. She is a victim of love to obtain this grace, and asks for nothing from her Celestial Spouse except for humiliations and sufferings. You also can take part in this noble design, and make many conquests to the love of the Divine Heart, if you adopt the same means. Attempt the simplest first, those which are best suited to your weakness; such as prayer, giving away pictures and medals, distributing books composed in honour of the Heart of Jesus, joining associations or confraternities canonically erected in its honour. Rest assured that nothing of this will be indifferent to this Divine Saviour; His faithful and grateful Heart will not fail to load you with blessings, to second your good intentions by leading many souls to His love, and the practice of Christian

virtues. You may conclude this day's exercise by reciting the Act of Consecration of the Blessed Margaret Mary to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

EIGHTEENTH DAY.

THE WORDS OF JESUS TO THE BLESSED MARGARET MARY.

3. *The Secret of the Promises of the Heart of Jesus.*

'Ex abundantia Cordis os loquitur.'

'Out of the abundance of the Heart the mouth speaketh' (Matt. xii. 34).

'De bono thesauro cordis sui profert bonum.'

'A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good' (Luke vi. 45).

NOTHING more clearly shows our Saviour's great wish to be loved by men, or reveals His Heart more fully, than the glorious promises He made to His faithful spouse, and the wondrous graces with which He loaded her, whenever, in her submission and docility, she did anything for the glory of the Sacred Heart.

'I am certain,' she writes, 'that however little love any Christian might have towards the Redeemer, did he know how pleasing this devotion is to Him, he would assuredly practise it. Our Saviour reserves infinite treasures for all who devote their efforts to establish this devotion. He

showed me many names written on His Heart, of those who wished to make Him known, loved, and honoured. The treasures of benediction and of graces in the Heart of Jesus are infinite. I know of no exercise in the spiritual life by which a soul may be so soon raised to perfection as by devotion to the Sacred Heart. Ah, how sweet it will be to die for those who have had a tender and constant devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus !'

We will endeavour to unite all the promises of Jesus Christ in one meditation. They are found in the works of the Blessed Margaret Mary. In reading her life one is satisfied in following the order of the times at which these promises were made to her ; but in her writings, and more particularly in one of her letters to the Mère de Saumaise, she has condensed them all in a few lines, from which we take the plan of this exercise. We will, then, first give a general idea of these glorious promises ; afterwards we will offer explanations of some of them in particular.

I. In a spirit of humility this saint relates the words addressed to her by Jesus Christ as if she were speaking of another. 'He often promised her,' she says, 'that those who were devout to the Sacred Heart should never perish ; and that as He is the source of all blessings, He would bestow them abundantly in all places having a representation of the Sacred Heart, placed there to be loved and honoured ; that by this means He would reunite divided families, would protect

those in necessity, would shed abroad the sweet unction of ardent charity in all communities who honoured this sacred picture; that He would turn aside the strokes of God's wrath from those who through sin had fallen away, and restore them to His grace; and would give a special grace of sanctification and salvation to the person who should first please Him by causing this holy image to be made.'

In another equally confidential letter to her former superior, Mère Grayfié, she writes even more freely: 'If you knew, my good mother, how much I feel myself urged to love the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ! It seems to me as if life were only given for that end. He promised me specially to bless those places in which a picture of His Divine Heart is honoured and loved. He gave me to know that His Heart is the Holy of Holies, the Holy Love; and that He would turn aside those chastisements from us which our sins have deserved, and obtain mercy for us.'

II. It will be sweet and useful to the pious reader to meditate now upon each promise specially made to the saint by Jesus Christ. We will relate them without altering the text, remembering that all these graces will be given on condition only of being devout to the Sacred Heart; that is to say, to love and honour Him, to labour to the utmost to glorify Him, even if only by giving the sacred pictures representing the Sacred

Heart to persons, that they may be gained to His love by this touching symbol of His love.

Read and meditate on these solemn promises, spoken by Jesus in His endeavour to gain our love.

1. 'I will give them all the graces necessary for their state.'

This general promise may appear somewhat vague, but it is explained by those which follow, and respond to the wishes and desires of every soul, in whatever circumstances.

2. 'I will give the blessing of My peace to families.'

3. 'I will console them in all their trials.'

4. 'I will be their sure refuge during life, and above all at the hour of death.'

5. 'I will shed abundant blessings upon all their undertakings.'

6. 'I will even bless those houses in which a picture of My Sacred Heart is exposed and honoured.'

These six promises seem to refer more particularly to persons in the world; and in order to attract them to the love of His Heart, Jesus Christ assures them graces in accordance with their usual thoughts—terrestrial graces; in a word, happiness and peace in this life. Yet more, these favours are promised without asking any return from these weaker and less generous souls; for He will accord these blessings to those families who honour His Sacred Heart by special prayers, and to all houses in which are pictures of the Sacred Heart.

The graces of a superior order are,

7. 'Sinners will find in My Heart the source and the infinite ocean of mercy.'

8. 'Tepid souls will become fervent.'

9. 'Fervent souls will rapidly rise to perfection.'

10. 'I will give priests the power to touch the most hardened sinners.'

11. 'Those who propagate this devotion shall have their names written in My Heart, and they shall never be effaced.'

One readily observes that in these divine promises all the treasures of grace are assured to those who are devout to the Sacred Heart, whatever be their position, state, or occupation. We see that Jesus wishes to be loved by all men, for there ought not to be one who would not ardently desire His promised benedictions.

We shall not go over the whole of these words again to point out their chief virtues and character; but that we may rouse hope and zeal, we will only comment upon two of these solemn promises—that which relates to tepid souls, and the promise addressed more particularly to priests, and all those who, like them, labour for the salvation of their neighbours.

It is promised to tepid souls that they shall become fervent, if they have recourse to the Heart of Jesus; if at least they strive to make others honour and love Him, even by keeping or distributing the holy pictures of this devotion. Instead

of continuing to disgust the Heart of their God, who was about to reject and cast them from Him, these languid souls would begin to touch Him with compassion, He would heal them, and love them once more. What a hope and consolation is this! O you who are, or who fear you are, in this sad state of tepidity and indifference, hasten to have recourse to the Heart of Jesus! Pray to Him with confidence, and believe in His word; yes, you shall yet live for His glory and love; a spark of that flame which consumes His Heart shall fall upon yours, and will kindle in you that sacred fire which He came to cast on the earth, and wishes to see everywhere.

But what can we say of that promise given to priests, and which He charged His faithful spouse, the Blessed Margaret Mary, to make known to us? 'I will give them power to touch the most hardened hearts.' Doubtless this grace is not confined to priests alone, whose state of life is to labour for the salvation of souls, but is intended for all who, animated by the same zeal, strive for the conversion of poor sinners. Let them, then, have confidence whilst they neglect not to have continual recourse to the Divine Heart; let them be intimately united to this Sacred Heart, live with its life, burn with its flames, and they shall have the happiness, and, as the promise says, even the *talent*, to convert and *to touch the most hardened.*

They shall learn this divine science from the Heart of God, and nothing shall be found to resist them.

Ah, this is not a vain promise or a deceitful hope! How many priests have proved this by experience, and can attest the marvellous efficacy of this devotion to the Heart of Jesus! They have found His word so faithful that the prodigies of grace surpassed their hopes, and even their wishes. It has been sufficient to erect an altar to the Sacred Heart, or expose one of the pictures, to see sinners return in crowds to the practice of the faith. Others have renewed an entire parish by erecting a Confraternity of the Sacred Heart. Even at the hour of death, incredulous, indifferent, hardened souls have been converted by simply showing them a picture of the Sacred Heart, which sufficed to restore these sinners to the life of hope and love, in a word, *to touch the most hardened.*

It would, indeed, be a great misfortune to any apostolic man to neglect so powerful a means of conversion, and in proof of this I will mention a single fact which will need no comment. A religious of the Company of Jesus had been requested by the Blessed Margaret Mary to make a careful engraving of the Sacred Heart. Being often hindered by other occupations, there was much delay in preparing this plate. 'This good father,' writes the saint, 'is so much occupied by Monsignor d'Autun in the conversion of heretics, that he has neither time nor leisure to give to the work so ardently desired by the Heart of our Divine Master. You cannot imagine, my much-loved mother, how greatly this delay afflicts and pains

me. I must avow confidently to you my belief that it is the cause of his converting so few infidels in this town. I seem constantly to hear these words: 'That if this good father had acquitted himself at once of his promise to the Sacred Heart, Jesus would have changed and converted the hearts of these infidels, on account of the joy He would have felt at seeing Himself honoured in the picture He so much wishes for. As, however, he prefers other work, even though to the glory of God, to that of giving Him this satisfaction, He will harden the hearts of these infidels, and the labours of this mission will not be crowned with much fruit.' It seems to us that there is much to be learned from this evidence of the saint. It teaches us a lesson of the highest importance: that the Sacred Heart is paramount, that it is the chief means, the source of all graces.

In concluding this exercise and Second Novena to-day, you will apply yourselves to recall to your minds all you have already studied of the revelations of the Heart of Jesus. Examine if you begin to understand. What does this picture say to you, with *the Cross*, *the Crown*, and *the Wound* of this Sacred Heart? What do *the Flames* say to you? Have you listened to the mysterious language of *the looks*, *the tears*, *the sighs* of Jesus, manifested to you in His Sacred Heart? Have you understood the sacred words by which He has declared His *love*, His *tenderness*, and above all His *desires* and *sorrows?* Have you faith in His *promises?*

If Heaven has granted you this grace, hasten to respond to your loving Redeemer by the gift of yourself, and all that you have, in the words of the Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart of our Saviour composed by the saint for one of her sisters.

Act of Consecration

To the Sacred Heart of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

I, N. N., give and consecrate myself to the Sacred Heart of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, my person and my life, my actions, troubles and sufferings, desiring no longer to make use of any part of my being except to honour, love, and glorify it. My irrevocable wish is to be His alone, and to do all for love of Him, renouncing with all my heart everything which can displease Him. I take thee, O Sacred Heart, for the sole object of my love, the protector of my life, the assurance of my salvation, the remedy of my weakness and inconsistency, the repairer of all the faults of my life, and my sure asylum and refuge at the hour of my death. O Heart of goodness, be my justification towards God the Father, and turn aside the glances of His just displeasure. O Heart of Love, I place all my confidence in thee, for I fear everything from my malice and weakness, but hope everything from thy goodness. Consume in me all that may displease or resist thee. Imprint thy pure love so deeply in my

heart that I may never forget or be separated from thee. I conjure thee by all thy goodness that my name may be written in thee, for I desire that all my happiness and glory in living or dying may consist in being thy slave. Amen.

Third Novena.

STUDY OF THE HEART OF JESUS IN THE MYSTERIES OF HIS LIFE AND DEATH.

NINETEENTH DAY.

STUDY OF THE HEART OF JESUS IN HIS INFANCY.

'Dedi Cor meum in cunctis operibus.'
'I have applied My Heart to all works' (Eccl. viii. 9).

If the most secret thoughts of the heart are often revealed by looks, sighs, and tears; if language yet more easily can express its inmost sentiments, still it is certain that there is a yet more sure and striking evidence of its real feelings in life itself; in a word, in its devoted actions and sacrifices.

Sometimes, indeed, one may misinterpret a look, or tears, or even the sense of words; but St. Ambrose says that it is impossible for a heart

that truly loves to remain inactive; it devotes and immolates itself; none can be deceived in this language; it is easily understood by all. True tenderness, sincere pity, generous love, will always lead men to devotion and sacrifice; he who loves gives himself wholly, gives his life and heart.

We have yet to make this incomparably beautiful and sweet study of the life of the Heart of Jesus, that we may learn to love and know Him more perfectly. The goodness, sweetness, tenderness, the profound compassion, and sacrifices of this Divine Saviour will manifest themselves to our ravished souls, and we shall be deeply touched by them. 'The goodness and kindness of our Saviour appeared' (Titus iii. 4). Then we shall at last understand.

These meditations ought to embrace all the mysteries of the life of Jesus Christ; there would then be no limit to this work, had not our Divine Master given Himself as the analysis of all He could say or do amongst us, when He said those grand words to His Apostles, 'Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of Heart' (Matt. xi. 29). We shall find that these virtues of meekness and humility were the principle of all His actions, and the reason of His greatest sacrifices.

The Lord has been good for us, says the holy king David; the tendernesses of His Heart exceed all else that He has done for us. Mercy prevails in all His works, love and kindness reveal themselves in the Heart of Jesus, and triumph. 'The

Lord is sweet to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works' (Ps. cxliv. 9). It now remains for us to contemplate a series of pictures, in which the Heart of this good Master will manifest the sentiments of an infinite tenderness, a devotion without limits, through life, unto death, and beyond it.

Our first consideration will be the Sacred Infancy of Jesus, and the mystery of His hidden life at Nazareth; we shall study His Heart in the bosom of His family, and in this we shall be enlightened by the moving words of the holy Gospel and of tradition.

I. We have already said that the Heart of Jesus, even before He spoke, had expressed its sentiments by the *looks* He cast upwards to Heaven, and upon Mary His Mother, upon Joseph, upon the shepherds and the Magi. It manifested itself by His *sighs* in the manger, and by His *tears*. Had you lifted the poor clothing that covered Him, you would have seen how the Heart of that Child palpitated with love for you, and burned with zeal for the glory of God His Father.

But we must contemplate Him at Nazareth, under the eyes of His Mother, and the guidance of Joseph, working meekly and submissively. A single word was sufficient for the Holy Spirit to express these treasures of infinite perfection; yet how much was hidden under this word! He was *subject* to them! St. Bernard and St. Bonaventure, who have marvellously interpreted this text, will

assist you in comprehending the amazing depth of the expression. 'Who,' say they, 'is obedient here, and to whom? But, above all, how, and in what?' Repeat over these last few words, and continue this beautiful contemplation.

You will learn to love and follow Jesus in the little details of His family life; you will soon then enter into His Heart, and there study all His tenderness for His Mother and respectful submission to St. Joseph. What sweetness and forethought for their simplest wishes! Here, as in all the rest of His life, we must contemplate the Child-God, a perfect Child, with a Heart more meek, more tender and loving than any other on earth, but with all heavenly perfections and the goodness of God.

Meditate upon and understand this thought. The Heart of the *Divine Child* knew all things, foresaw all, and understood all; and the *Child-God* joyfully and lovingly hastened to do all that was dutiful to His Mother and St. Joseph.

When Mary awoke Him, He at once opened His eyes, and stretched forth His hands with a smile. During the day He rested or prayed in silence, knowing she wished to work for Him; or, at the first bidding, threw Himself into His beloved Mother's arms, to seek the pure source of that virginal milk which nourished Him. Ah, then it was that the Heart of Jesus palpitated with love on Mary's heart! To please her He early began to speak and walk. Each day He showed new secrets of tenderness to His holy Mother; and,

more frequent than all, in the early years of His childhood He prayed by her side and with her.

As soon as the Divine Child was capable of working with St. Joseph, He did so with submission and tenderness; there is no mystery in His mortal life more touching than this. Whether they laboured together in the humble workshop at Nazareth, or went to work in the houses of rich neighbours, Jesus was ever anxious to obey the orders of St. Joseph, and anticipate his wishes in all things. As with Mary His Mother, so the Heart of this *Divine Child* inspired and directed all the acts of the young apprentice, whom the holy patriarch was permitted to call his Son.

Christian artists in many ages have found inspired subjects for representation in scenes from the life of the Holy Family, and the reader will do well to realise them. Whether one contemplates the Divine Child in the arms of St. Joseph, smiling at His father, or lavishing upon him His tender caresses, or studies Him during His hours of labour or prayer, one cannot fail to admire these intimate relations of filial love and paternal affection, the source of glory for this great saint, and, above all, of his happiness. All these blessings flowed from the Heart of Jesus to the hearts of Mary and Joseph.

II. I feel a real pleasure in entering on the exposition of the second portion of this meditation. Tradition tells us of one single word which is of itself sufficient to nourish the soul and heart of the

children of God. That rigid and austere saint, St. Jerome, has made it known to us. He heard this sweet word at Nazareth, and faithfully echoes it to us as he heard it there, and in the adjacent country, where this memorial still existed of the goodness of Jesus. He tells us that Jesus was so kind and sweet towards children of His own age, and they felt such happiness in speaking with Him, that they had given Him a surname of their own. They did not speak of Him as Jesus, though that name was one of surpassing beauty; they always called Him *Sweetness*, 'Suavitas,' and among themselves used to say, 'Eamus ad Suavitatem,—'*Let us go to Sweetness*,' when they met together, and wished to go to see Mary's Child.

Let us go to Sweetness or Suavity itself! We shall find in the subject of to-morrow's meditation that, even in the course of His public life, little children might well continue to give Him this name, for His kindness to them never ceased. These words will suffice to show what treasures of goodness these children must have found in the Heart of this Saviour-God.

All that remains for us to do is to invite the reader to meditate prayerfully, and then thoughts will be suggested to him, each more touching than the other; he will readily imagine numerous circumstances in which the infinite *Sweetness* of the Heart of Jesus would be revealed to those children, happy witnesses of His goodness. It is evident that they must have had many proofs of

the extreme kindness of His disposition to have induced them to give Him this surname. Only by meditation can we realise these touching facts, for they are not mentioned in the Holy Gospel. I have no regret that these wondrous things are not spoken of in the Sacred Scriptures, and I have no intention of seeking them in those books justly termed apocryphal, but in which perhaps may be preserved some accounts of the early life of Jesus. Matter for contemplation on this subject may doubtless be found therein. The faithful words of St. Jerome are enough, and this echo from Nazareth fully suffices. You will find that meditation supplies material where the sacred authors have been silent. St. John bears witness, at the close of his gospel, that they could never have given an account of all. I will, however, indicate a few circumstances in which the good Heart of the Divine Jesus would doubtless often be revealed. Thus one might imagine when these children were with Him, if one of them from any cause began to weep, the *sweetness* of Jesus would soon console it; another might fall, and be hurt, the *sweetness* of Jesus would raise it up and heal it, as we cannot doubt; should another seem displeased, the *sweetness* of Jesus would calm and appease its anger in an instant. If one of these little children were ill, Jesus would visit it on the same day with His holy Mother, and by some word full of goodness He would charm away the suffering, console the family, and heal the sick child. If there were

any dispute between His young companions, or disagreement, they would have recourse to the *sweetness* of Jesus ; He would settle their difficulty and reconcile their hearts. Subdued by the incomparable charm of His disposition and His extreme kindness, all loved and blessed Him, all were glad to return to Him again, and spoke of Him to one another as the *Sweetness.*

Let *us* go, then, to this Sweetness ! Remember this word, for it is beautiful, and so much in harmony with our Christian manner of speaking, for we also say *the Good God*, and for the future we will never separate these two ideas in our faithful hearts. But, alas, in how many souls the enemy of Jesus has destroyed the sentiments of confidence and love which the remembrance of this infinite goodness should inspire ! O you, then, who fear Jesus, begin to love Him, and your hearts shall be enlightened. 'Ye that fear the Lord, love Him, and your hearts shall be enlightened' (Eccl. ii. 10). O dear reader, remember when you pray that you speak to the *Good God ;* go then with confidence.

Fear Him not so much ; love Him much more. Engrave this little sentence on your soul, and let nothing ever efface it.

Recite to-day the beautiful Litany of the Holy Childhood. You will see in each title the virtues of the Heart of Jesus, and observe that they are all really summed up in sweetness and humility.

O Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, make my heart like Thine !

TWENTIETH DAY.

STUDY OF THE HEART OF JESUS IN HIS PUBLIC LIFE.

'Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis Corde.'
'Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of Heart' (Matt. xi. 29).

When our Saviour Jesus Christ entered upon His public career, He showed the utmost kindness to men, and the most tender compassion towards those who were in suffering. He was not only a faithful and generous soul, but a devoted brother and a true father ; He felt all the love of a mother for us ; He vouchsafed to take all these titles Himself, and had there been other expressions which could more fully reveal the tendernesses and devotedness of His Heart, doubtless He would have employed them also. He loved us infinitely : He proved by the acts of His life what could be but imperfectly expressed in words.

To-day we will study three of the pictures we find in the Gospel pages, the contemplation of them will enable us to become better acquainted with the meek and loving Heart of Jesus, or let us rather say with the text, infinitely meek and humble, for these two words comprise and express all. I. Jesus blessing little children. II. Jesus forgiving sinners. III. Jesus in the midst of His Apostles.

I. 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not' (Mark x. 14). Here is one

of those words sufficient to make known a heart: *Suffer!*

The Apostles, who were hard rough men, had not yet understood their Good Master's Heart, and did not love as He did. They were irritated by the noise which the poor children made who came crowding to receive His benediction; they drove them pitilessly away, and no doubt this redoubled their cries; their mothers could not give up the hope of seeing the little ones blessed, and encouraged them to go to Jesus, presenting the very young to Him themselves. Jesus, touched with their faith, received them with kindness. This displeased the disciples still more, who repulsed them again without pity. It was at this point that Jesus said to them, 'Suffer these dear children to come to Me, and do not prevent them.'

Hearing this, and losing all fear, the children hastened eagerly to Him, and looked lovingly and hopefully at Him. Jesus blessed them; stretching forth His Divine Hands, He placed them on their heads, and even stooped to kiss the brows of the smallest among them. 'And embracing them' (Mark x. 16), 'He took them to His Heart.'

Still the astonished Apostles could not understand all this tenderness; but the mothers went away happy, thinking this was no common man, and many of them, at the sight of so much goodness recognised a God, and followed Him.

Whilst contemplating this sweet picture you will make many touching reflections. First, you

will enter into the Heart of our Saviour, there to discover His most secret thoughts; to find out what it was that so attracted children to Jesus, and what it was in these children that could so charm the Heart of your God. Then you will see that it is the Church of Jesus alone that has understood the Heart of this Good Master, and preserved this tenderness for children; that she also loves them and nourishes them with the purest milk, that she may bring them up in innocence and in the love of God. 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not' (Mark x. 14). O what light and truth in this evangelical word! What treasures of love in this Divine Heart!

II. Jesus forgiving sinners. It will be difficult here for us to follow the ordinary plan of our contemplations, for this is not a picture we have to consider, but rather a whole gallery which the pious reader can examine with delight in his meditation. We, however, must select one, though it is not easy to decide which shall arrest our attention.

Jesus showed such kindness towards poor sinners! His compassionate Heart often sought them out, and welcomed them with infinite mercy. Sometimes He ate with them—He was even reproached by His enemies for this; at others, He ministered to them with ineffable kindness and patience; He profited by every circumstance to do them good, as in the case of the Samaritan

woman. We must choose between the pictures of the woman taken in adultery and that of the Magdalen.

In the first of these, it is impossible not to be touched by the looks and words of Jesus. All His Heart is in His gracious and merciful question: 'Where are thy accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?' 'No man, Lord,' she said, with eyes cast down, yet filled with tears and hope. Jesus, looking upon her with a penetrating yet mild glance, said to her, 'Neither will I condemn thee. It is not I that will condemn thee' (John viii. 11). What a pardon! What goodness!

But in Magdalen we have a yet more beautiful picture. The Heart of Jesus forgave her so lovingly! Our Divine Master was at dinner in the house of a rich Pharisee, who was a leper, named Simon. Mary Magdalen heard of His being there, and immediately hastened thither with an alabaster vase of precious perfumes, which she broke, pouring them on the blessed feet of our Lord. She cast herself weeping at His knees, and with her long hair wiped the tears and costly essences which had fallen on His adorable feet. The meek Saviour looked upon her, also the leprous Simon; but how differently! 'If Jesus were truly a prophet,' said the leper, 'He would have known what this woman is, and would quickly dismiss her.' But Jesus knew full well; His eyes had penetrated to the depths of the heart of Magdalen, and had seen there penitence and love. He said

to her, 'Go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee;' then He added, 'Her sins, which are many, are forgiven her, for she loved much.' Heavenly peace descended into the poor sinner's soul: she rose with the glorious happiness of a pure and holy conscience. This is the picture I urge you to contemplate with much attention, for in it are revealed the looks and words of the goodness and mercy of the Heart of Jesus.

You may meditate also, in concluding this study, upon the forgiveness which Jesus, in dying, asked His Father to grant His murderers, even excusing their crime to Him. 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do' (Luke xxiii. 34). Surely you will exclaim, What goodness, what mercy! And the Heart is the Heart of God!

III. Jesus with His disciples. There are in the Gospel many touching scenes in which the meekness and patience of Jesus with His disciples are displayed. These poor, simple, ignorant, and rough men often did not understand their good Master's words; sometimes they disputed among themselves, even with a sort of jealousy; they asserted certain rights of precedence, wished that Jesus might be made a king, that they might have the first places near His throne, and at other times, misled by a false or too ardent zeal, desired God to call down fire from heaven upon His enemies, as did the prophet Elias. Jesus calmed them, and sought to make them understand His Spirit and His Heart, always inclined to meekness and mercy.

In considering the picture we have selected amongst so many of our Lord with His disciples, I prefer to illustrate it by a narrative drawn from tradition, in which the goodness of the Heart of our Lord will be at once recognised, and will perfectly answer the end we proposed to ourselves in these meditations, namely, to manifest, learn, and know the Sacred Heart, and to diffuse the love of this devotion.

The fact we are about to relate was told by St. Peter to the Pope and martyr St. Clement, who says, 'St. Peter could never speak of this without shedding tears; I cannot myself write it without moistening the page with my tears. But as the saint loved to remind us of it often, I am glad to be able to teach you this proof of immense kindness. Jesus usually passed His nights in prayer; but often during His sublimest orisons He thought of us. This Divine Master, who had not where to lay His Head, watched to see that we wanted for nothing. During the day He thought of our food, and of our sleep during the night. "I have seen Him," said Peter, weeping, "I have seen Him more than once come up to the room in which we were sleeping, and fearing lest we might suffer from the cold, strip off His own mantle and deign to lay it across our feet; then He would go back to His prayer."'

Were we not correct when we said He had the kindest Heart, as tender as the heart of a mother? Only a mother could be so tender, and perhaps

there may not be many readers capable of appreciating and understanding these touching revelations of the Heart of Jesus. But how much we wish some Christian artist could be found who would endeavour to portray this scene upon canvas, and, if I may use the expression, make this feature of divine goodness more popular by familiarising the whole world with it! None could see this sweet picture without saying with transport and tears, 'O, how good is Jesus! Jesus is kindness itself!' 'The Lord is sweet to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works' (Ps. cxliv. 9). To conclude this exercise, and the better to teach us how good and generous Jesus was in forgiving, and how meek and patient with His disciples, we need but to remember what He did for the unhappy Judas; all that He did to save him, and how He even offered him His grace at the moment of the betrayal. Perhaps there is no more affecting picture in the entire history of the life and death of our Saviour than this of Jesus Christ receiving the perfidious kiss of this monster, and pressing him to His Heart. But, alas, it did not touch him, and Judas remained insensible to the last, even to death.

In a fervent colloquy, you will ask of our Saviour to give you light and grace to understand, and a special relish and attraction for these sacred verities; make an honourable reparation to console His Divine Heart for all the ingratitudes of men, above all, those who seem to count upon His

mercy, whilst they offend and resist all the appeals of His tenderness.

TWENTY-FIRST DAY.

STUDY OF THE HEART OF JESUS IN HIS MIRACLES.

'Pertransit bene faciendo.'
'He went about doing good' (Acts x. 38).

A MIRACLE is the grandest, the most certain and authentic revelation of divinity. God only has the power to alter the laws He has made. 'He alone doth wonderful things' (Ps. lxxi. 18). But there is, in the prodigies worked by our Saviour, a special character, unique and without exception; for all were acts of kindness and mercy, proofs of love. His mercies are over all His works, consequently all these wonders are so many touching revelations of His Heart. This remark, essential to the subject which is about to occupy us, will give us the plan for one of the most beautiful meditations of this month. We are, as it were, about to enjoy the fruits of these pious exercises; and in studying this special character of the works of Jesus, we shall learn to know and to love His Divine Heart. We will commence by proving this general law of the miracles of Christ, and we will then apply it to some particular facts, viz. the three great miracles worked by this Divine Master.

I. It is very remarkable that absolutely all these works were inspired by goodness and love. In all the history of this God-Man you will not find a single miracle effected simply to prove His power. One might say that He did these marvels, not so much to prove that He was God, but because He could not refrain from the exercise of His great and infinite goodness. His Heart is touched as soon as He hears a complaint or a sigh; a tear moves Him, and He trembles at the sight of a wound. He grants all prayers, He consoles all sorrows; at every step He works fresh miracles of goodness. There is nothing, I repeat, more beautiful and moving, or more divine, than this characteristic goodness.

Many, indeed, were His opportunities for working other prodigies. They were asked for by both friends and enemies; and it seems as if on these occasions, had He manifested His divinity in a manner so striking, His kingdom would for ever have been established on earth.

But what do we find? Most frequently He did not reply, or He was displeased, as on the occasion of being asked to avenge Himself by fire from heaven. So far from working miracles in presence of His judges, He did not even reply. He did not come down from the cross, though taunted by His enemies with blasphemies to do so. He did not show Himself to them after His glorious resurrection. You will not find a single exception to this law: He only worked miracles

of goodness. He miraculously cured one of those who came to take Him in the Garden of Olives; He died on the cross for those murderers who insulted Him; and to comfort His Apostles, and bring peace to them, He came to them several times after His resurrection.

You will find that our Lord's miracles have not only this special character of goodness as their cause, but as their end; that is to say, Jesus did these wonders because He is good, because His Heart is filled with tenderness and compassion, also to comfort those who mourn and suffer; in a word, to do good to all. They were so convinced of this in Judæa, that if any one was ill, it was not the custom to ask Jesus to grant a cure; He was simply told of the sickness, and He replied, 'He is cured.' At other times they brought Him a number of afflicted people, and He healed them all. Again, those that were sick talked among themselves, and went together to seek Him; on one occasion ten lepers, and all returned to their homes healed.

It is a great consolation to contemplate the Divine Saviour surrounded by this multitude, weeping, crying out, and pressing round His sacred person. To a blind man our Lord says, 'What would you, My friend?' 'Lord, that I may see!' and at once He restores him to sight. 'Lord, that I may hear!' says a deaf man; and this good Saviour restores his hearing instantly. 'And I,' says the poor leper, 'if Thou wilt, Thou canst heal

me also!' 'I will; be thou cleansed.' 'Ah,' says a poor woman, 'if I could but touch the hem of His garment, I should be healed!' She presses through the crowd, and touches the hem of the sacred robe. Jesus says, 'Who touched Me?' But she was already healed. You see plainly that this woman, and all the rest of the poor sufferers, touched His Heart, and that from this Heart went forth the virtue that worked these miracles. Truly He did these things because He is good, and this infinite goodness is the proof of His divinity. 'If you are a god,' said a barbarous people to the proudest of conquerors, 'you ought to do good to men rather than destroy the little they have received from nature.'

II. But let us point out this special quality as evidenced in the three grand miracles of our Lord. I refer to the three resurrections related in the Gospel. The resurrection of a dead person is certainly regarded as the greatest of prodigies, because the whole world knows that the exception to this law is rare indeed; but Jesus raised many dead to life, and gave to the disciples of John this authentic sign of His divine mission on earth. 'The dead rise again' (Matt. xi. 5). Details of three of these miracles only are given in the history of His life, and we shall study and recognise the Heart of Jesus in them.

1. The resurrection of Jairus's daughter.—In this miracle there is more than goodness. It is impossible not to admire its infinite delicacy, if

we may be permitted to make use of such an expression in speaking of the Heart of God. Jesus, having entered the house in which the young girl had just expired, and who was always moved at the sight of tears, began at once to console the bereaved parents. 'Why make you this ado, and weep?' (Mark v. 39.) 'Why this trouble, and these tears? The child is not dead; she is sleeping.' This He said, as if to prepare them for the great joy in store for them when they saw her alive again; so, taking her by the hand, He said to her, 'Damsel, arise!' And her spirit returned to her, and she arose, and walked. We find the *power* of God in the restoration to life; but the extreme *feeling* of the Heart of Jesus shines forth in the first words He speaks, '*Do not weep*,' and His delicacy in the words, '*She is not dead, but sleepeth.*' We clearly see that the prodigy of this first resurrection must be solely attributed to His goodness of Heart.

2. The raising to life of the widow's son in the city of Naïm.—We can have no doubt as to the motive which actuated Jesus in performing this miracle which no one had asked of Him. It was simply out of the goodness of His Heart, which was moved by pity, compassion, and mercy, as is proved by the words of the Holy Scriptures.

Jesus approaches the gates of the city as the funeral procession is passing. We may be sure this meeting was not accidental. He saw the poor widow mourning. 'Being moved with mercy to-

wards her, He said to her, "Weep not"' (Luke vii. 13). Ever this same sentiment, this cry from the Heart, 'Do not weep!' And He came near, and touched the bier. And they that carried it stood still. And He said, 'Young man, I say to thee, arise!' And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And He gave him to his mother; and they glorified God, saying, 'A great prophet is risen up among us, and God has visited His people.' But we, touched by such infinite goodness, can never cease to repeat, 'This is the Heart of God thus revealed to men; this is how our good Jesus seeks to teach us to know His Heart, that He may draw our hearts to His love.'

3. The resurrection of Lazarus.

We have already spoken of this miracle as the greatest of all these marvels of power and love in our meditation on the Tears of the Heart of Jesus; we shall not therefore dwell long upon it. Again we see the goodness, compassion, and love by which the Heart of Jesus was inspired when He performed this amazing miracle. Surely you will be moved, as you contemplate the Divine Saviour weeping at the tomb of Lazarus. This God, who cannot see tears unmoved, has tears to shed over His friends. The crowd of persons who witnessed this prodigy of resurrection from the dead appeared less sensible of the power manifested on this occasion than of the goodness and kindness of Heart, and of His love for His friend; for they did not say, This is a Prophet, this is the Mes-

siah, this is a God; but, What a Heart! What love! 'See how He loved him!' (John ix. 36.)

This is the only reflection we leave with the pious reader, and it is the chief fruit of these meditations; for, seeing how good the Heart of Jesus is, and how loving, it must teach us to know Him first, and then to love Him: 'That they may know!'

St. Augustine, writing on the subject of these three resurrections, which he agrees with us in attributing more to the goodness of God than to a manifestation of His power, makes a fine observation, and we will conclude this meditation by the luminous and consoling thought of the great doctor of the Church. He assures us that all the miracles worked by this good Master for the healing of diseases, and raising the dead to life, are a lively image of those wonders which God can and will effect in our souls. Thus He gives sight to the unbelieving, life to hardened sinners, as He cured the blind, the deaf, and paralytics, &c. There can be nothing at once more striking and instructive than all these analogies.

But sin not only wounds souls, it destroys them. Jesus, who tenderly loves them, is touched with compassion at the sight of their misfortune. He is able to save them, and will do so if they implore His mercy; but it seems, says St. Augustine, as if the longer the victim has been dead, the greater the power required from this great God to restore it to life. A word was sufficient to waken

the daughter of Jaïrus from the sleep of death. A great effort, a formal command, was necessary in the raising to life of the young man of Naïm. 'I say to thee, arise!' But for Lazarus, who had been dead four days, there were tears and a solemn prayer, with cries: 'Lazarus, come forth!'

St. Augustine's thought on this subject is remarkable; he says there are many conversions, or rather spiritual resurrections, which will require from us more or less effort, according as the soul may have been dead for a longer or shorter period. O you who are praying to save the soul of the child who has just been lost in sin, have confidence; a few words from the Heart of Jesus, a tear, will suffice to effect this miracle. You, O Christian mother, or virtuous child, who would recall to life a husband, or a father, long estranged, perhaps, from the living God, pray, and weep; cease not to invoke this Divine Heart, and He will have compassion on your sorrow. Have confidence, He will hear your prayer; that soul shall be saved; but you must persevere, perhaps these may need many tears; but it will be restored to you, so have confidence. Jesus is good.

You will conclude this exercise with a fervent prayer to the Heart of Jesus for the conversion and salvation of some poor sinner, and specially for the restoration to life of that soul most dear to you. Have faith! Let this Divine Saviour see your love that He may say to your tears: 'See how he loved him!' and even now shall you ob-

tain the grace you seek. 'To-day is salvation come to this house' (Luke xix. 9).

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

STUDY OF THE HEART OF JESUS IN HIS MYSTERIES.

1. *Mysteries of Love: the Eucharist.*

'Dilexit me, et tradidit semetipsum pro me.'

'He loved me, and delivered Himself for me' (Gal. ii. 20).

We said that the heart is principally made known by its acts; but its love is proved above all by sacrifice, and by that devotion even unto death which it is ready to suffer for the beloved object. Jesus loved us infinitely. It was an inspiration of His Heart which led Him to sacrifice and give Himself for us, to immolate Himself wholly, without reservation and without recompense. His Heart is a true victim of love. Until the close of this Third Novena we shall meditate on the immense sacrifices He has made for us; this is the most important portion of our study of the Divine Heart, and it ought to accomplish the triumph of His love in our souls.

We will begin with the mystery of divine love, the Supper of Jesus with His Apostles, when He delivered and gave Himself to us with His own hands; to John, who leant on His breast, and to

Judas, about to betray Him. During this exercise, you should have before your eyes the sweet picture of the supper-room, and enter with us into the Heart of this good Master, that you may see what love and sacrifices are there.

What, in fact, is the Divine Eucharist, instituted on that day by Jesus Christ our Saviour, on the evening before His death?

I. It is God, who out of His great love for us wishes to abide with us even to the end of time. II. It is God, who immolates Himself daily for us, and every instant of each day. III. It is God, who gives Himself to us, wholly, body and soul, that He may thus win all hearts. This, then, is the mystery of the sacrifice of love, and the most magnificent revelation of the Heart of Jesus. 'I have desired to celebrate this Pasch with you,' He said. 'Take, and eat; this is My body, which is to be delivered to death for you. Yes, I will remain with you till the consummation of all things.' Let us ask that holy Apostle, who reposed his head gently on the Heart of Jesus during the celebration of these mysterious sacrifices, that we may enter with him into the secrets of divine love, that we may come to know and to love this Divine Heart.

I. The Eucharist is God present and truly with us upon earth; a hidden God, but living, and substantially our brother in exile, our travelling companion here below, and our brother in tears. He is there, He calls you: 'This is My body.

This is My blood. This body, which will soon be delivered to death for you, and crucified for the salvation of your souls. My blood will soon be shed for you.' Ah, believe His word, and pity also those who have dared to protest against these words of love, those unhappy orphans, your brethren cut off from the faith, who say it is not Himself, but an image. Yes, let these poor orphans, these disinherited children, console themselves as they best can with this figure and image of their father. *We* have the happiness of possessing Him. He is there; He calls us! But meditate and see at what a price He has made these sacrifices, and how the love of your God triumphs, as St. Bernard says: 'See how He has stripped Himself of all the attributes of His glory to hide Himself in this Sacrament.' Where is His power, His immensity, His eternity? His power! And yet He is so weak, that one breath from mortal lips is sufficient to displace Him from His altar. His immensity! And yet He is so small that He is like an atom of dust. Ah, the hand of the priest often trembles, His eyes fill with tears, as He seeks this God in the consecrated vessels of gold. His eternity! Whilst He lives and dies every moment in this sacramental mystery. He only lives to die, and to die in our hearts.

He is there, the hidden God, the poor solitary of the tabernacle! Do you understand what His Heart seeks of you? As it is love alone that attaches Him thus to this earth, and urges Him to

remain with us, think of Him, go sometimes to visit and adore Him, tell Him that you love Him. He Himself asks this of you. 'Remember Me and visit Me,' He says (Jer. xv. 15). Come, and He will renew in your soul all the marvels He wrought when on this earth. He will be your light and your strength; He will heal all the wounds of your soul.

II. The Eucharist is God immolated each hour in the day, and at every moment for us, and for love of us. His blood flows on the sacred altar-stone, and it is this precious blood in which the thunderbolts of angry Heaven are quenched. This blood cries more strongly than that of Abel, and asks mercy for poor sinners.

It is a dogmatic truth, and one of the most sacred teachings of the faith, that the Sacrifice of the Altar is identically the same as that of Calvary, the same Victim as that on the Cross, the same Priest as at Golgotha, and, finally, the same end and object in the immolation. But what was the object of this bloody sacrifice, the cause of the death of Jesus? Who was the real executioner at Calvary? He loved me! It was love, His love for us. He is immolated by love in the Sacred Mysteries. He delivered Himself up, He still delivers Himself up; He died, He still dies for love. He loved me, and delivered Himself for me. 'What do I say?' exclaims the same Apostle, St. Paul. 'He has loved us too much. His exceeding charity' (Eph. ii. 4). O Heart, victim of love,

what dost Thou ask of our hearts, since Thou thus sacrificest Thyself for us? Is it not that we should come to this august sacrifice, and endeavour to unite ourselves to Thee, and immolate ourselves with Thee? Thou desirest at least that we should pray with Thee, by Thee, and as Thou prayest, to the glory of the Father, for the salvation of the world, and above all for the pardon of poor sinners. We must assist at this sacrifice of the Lamb, as Magdalen and John, the beloved disciple, who mingled their tears with Thy blood.

III. The Eucharist is God given to the heart of man; God become the bread of our life, the nourishment of our souls. This is the end of this august Sacrament, and the last triumph of love. Jesus said, 'Take, and eat.' When, at the words of the priest, He comes down from heaven to our altars, this great God remains there, until He can enter men's hearts, and communicate to them His life, in return for their love. He waits until He is sought by a friend, until He can give Himself to a brother; perhaps, alas, to a traitor, to a Judas.

There is nothing to which His love for us does not expose Him; some hearts will be cold and languid; some souls guilty and defiled with sin; the perfidy of some will deliver Him up to death and the outrages of the evil one. He foresaw all this; but He loved us, and was not moved from His decision. Yes, He said, 'I will be with you all days, even to the consummation of the world' (Matt. xxviii. 20). He took the bread, blessed

it, consecrated it, and gave it to them all, Peter, John, and Judas! 'Take, and eat; this is My body.' Thus it is that the love of His Heart for us constrained Him in a last triumph to deliver Himself up, and to give Himself to us with His own hands.

We will terminate this exercise by meditating on a conversation between Jesus and the Apostle St. John, who, at the supper, leaned his head on Jesus's breast, and sought to draw from Him His mysterious secrets of love. We may imagine that, being thus placed during the entire repast, John would familiarly and affectionately converse with his good Master, who, yielding to his entreaties, would tell him what He was about to do. This hypothesis is most natural, the first idea of which we find in the meditations of St. Bonaventure. Jesus had already uttered words which comprised the most essential points of faith upon the Eucharistic Sacrament; and moreover, at the supper, He had announced that one of the twelve would betray Him. We may imagine that John would seek for fuller confidence, and would ask the Saviour's meaning, and that Jesus, opening His Heart to him, would thus reveal all this mystery to him.

Listen to what they say, in the silence of your soul, that you may not lose a word of the colloquy.

'Yes,' said Jesus, 'soon I shall take the bread that is on this table, and change it into Myself. It will be My body; I give it to you all, even to him who is about to betray Me; then I will change the wine into My blood, and will give it you to

drink. Besides all this, I will make you priests, with power to consecrate also the bread, and change it into My body; you shall give *Me*, in this bread, to all who shall ask you, and I will enter their hearts. I love them, and desire to be loved by them. I will give Myself to them, that they may give themselves to Me. I also will give them My Heart, and they shall understand.' 'My delights were to be with the children of men' (Prov. viii. 31).

'O, do not so, my good Jesus,' said the amazed Apostle, carried away with this excess of tenderness. 'O, no; You are deceived by love; do not so. You think that men will love You, but You will see that they will not; they are ungrateful; they will desert You, and forget You in Your temples and on Your altars. You will call them, but they will not come to You. You will invite them to this table, they will refuse; and even if they come, there will certainly be many who will bring cold and languid hearts. You see that, even amongst *us*, here is a traitor. What will, then, be the case later? There will be perfidious enemies, impure and sacrilegious hearts. I beseech You do not so, good Master; or if You have resolved upon this, say at least that You will only give Yourself to Your friends, to the pure of heart, and that You will not give so great a grace to wicked and unworthy souls.'

'Cease,' said Jesus; 'I wish to give Myself to and for all. I would rather expose Myself to all the

sacrileges, coldnesses, and even profanations than cast those who love Me into fear and perplexity. They would never believe themselves worthy, they would think I did not enter into their hearts. I will give Myself to them all; I will be with them even to the consummation of ages.'

And whilst this beloved Apostle shed tears on His Master's breast, He changed the bread into His body, and gave it to Peter, John—to all the disciples, even to Judas.

O Heart, victim of love! To respond to this excess of love in the Heart of Jesus, let love triumph in your Heart, and by your frequent and fervent Communions make reparation for those who forget or profane this great mystery.

You have doubtless heard of *Communion of Reparation*, a practice which has already wrought so much good in the Church. Lose no time in joining this pious association; you will console the Heart of Jesus, and draw down upon you many new graces, which flow incessantly from this Divine Heart.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

STUDY OF THE HEART OF JESUS IN HIS MYSTERIES.

2. *Mysteries of Sorrows: the Agony.*

'Dedit semetipsum pro nobis, ut nos redimeret.'
'He gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us' (Titus ii. 14).

To give or devote oneself is the act of a loving heart, and the greater the love the more is the devotion. The most perfect devotion is that which extends even to the sacrifice of life, and the strongest love is that unto death: Jesus Christ Himself has said that there can be no greater, and this is the measure, or rather the infinite perfection, of the love of His Heart for us—He loved to the end. Not only did He give Himself to men in the mystery of the Eucharist, but on the very day of the Supper He began to suffer and die for us.

When we say, He began, it is certainly an unsuitable expression, for He suffered for us from the first moment of the Incarnation. The Apostle St. Paul and the prophets all bore witness that this was the most ardent wish of His Heart: Jesus, when He cometh into the world, saith, 'O My Father, sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldest not; but a body Thou hast fitted to Me; holocausts for sin did not please Thee. Then said I, Behold, I come; in the head of the book it is written of Me that I should do Thy will, O God. I have desired it, and Thy law in the midst of My Heart. Then I said, Behold, I come' (Heb. x. 7, 9; Ps. xxxix. 8).

In this long history of the sufferings of our Saviour for our salvation, it is our intention to pause only on those which particularly affected His Heart, and we will begin by devoting two exercises to the agony of this Divine Master in the Garden of Olives.

This was the hour of the greatest bitterness and most cruel dolours for the Adorable Heart, and the true passion of His soul. Jesus delivered Himself up to four distinct and terrible tortures : weariness, fear, sadness, and agony. 'He gave Himself for us.' To-day we will make our meditation solely upon the two first sufferings of this Divine Heart in the Garden of Gethsemani : *weariness* and *fear*.

I. First, then, let us consider this weariness. A God weary upon earth ! What an expression is this ! 'And He began to be weary.' Weariness is a vague trouble which seizes upon the soul, and takes possession of the heart ; it is a grief which may become so profound in a soul needing succour, and in a heart meeting with no sympathy, that it easily passes into discouragement and even disgust of life. One cannot see either the time, or the cause, of the end of this suffering, and the abyss of despair seems ready to open. This weariness is a weakness, a real infirmity ; and the heart of man would never have suffered such a trial but for original sin. Jesus Christ, made like unto us, wished to know all the miseries of our poor fallen nature ; He permitted weariness to penetrate into His soul, and to envelop, as it were, His Heart.

But if the Man-God could suffer thus, the God-Man was never utterly cast down. It was in the Garden of Gethsemani alone that He experienced this pain, for before His hour of agony we find no trace of such desolation.

You will meditate upon the causes and effects of this first dolour of the Heart of Jesus, which have all been revealed to us by His prophets and by God Himself, who confided the secret to His Apostles. The dejection, the absolute abandonment in which He found Himself at this time, when a series of terrible sufferings was about to commence for Him, was the cause of this cruel sorrow and this mortal weariness.

Jesus had relied, it seems, upon the faithful sympathy of three disciples, whom He had brought with Him to the garden. He had told them to watch and pray. He went three times to seek for consolation from them, and to confide the sorrows of His Heart, but was unable to obtain a single word of sympathy. They understood not; their eyes, heavy with sleep, soon closed; and Jesus, desolate and more wearied, went away again to continue His prayer, and shed tears of blood. 'I looked,' He says by His prophet, 'for one that would grieve together with Me, but there was none; and for one that would comfort Me, and I found none' (Ps. lxviii. 21). 'I looked about, and there was none to help' (Isa. lxiii. 5).

Utterly abandoned by all on the earth, He could have recourse only to heaven, praying incessantly

those words which, in His infinite sorrow, reveal to us the perfect submission of His will to the will of His Heavenly Father : 'Father, if Thou wilt, remove this chalice from Me ; but yet not My will, but Thine be done' (Luke xxii. 42).

Contemplate your Divine Master, His face prostrate on the earth, His sad anxious expression ; He looks on all sides, weeps, and cries ; the blood flows from His sorely wounded Heart ; His sacred garments are steeped in it, even to the ground flows this ruddy stream. But, behold, He prays. Remember this ; and if some day weariness should seize upon your soul, and penetrate even to your heart, do not fail to imitate your Saviour and pray, and an angel shall descend from heaven to comfort you, or at least to strengthen you. Seek not for comfort elsewhere, complain not to others. The earth will not respond to you ; your very friends will not understand your grief, nay, they will even seem insensible to it ; pray, still pray, above all pray to the Heart of Jesus, which knew all and every weariness, and He will have pity upon you ; He will save you from the abyss of despair which threatens you, and is ready to swallow you up.

II. Fear.—This is yet more astonishing and mysterious, a God who fears, who is afraid. Fear is either a weakness or a cowardice. Far be from us the blasphemous thought which would dare attribute to cowardice the terror which seized on Jesus Christ ; but He felt this weakness, and His fear was so great that He trembled as He prayed

to God, asking Him to remove this bitter chalice.* Fear would seem to be an impression on that part of the soul which is termed sensitive, and more particularly an effect of the imagination; but it affects the heart also; and in our Lord's agony it was His Heart that especially suffered, as we may easily see, by meditating on His prayer to Heaven, and on those tears of blood.

It is an amazing thing that there are some souls so strong, some hearts so firm even in the midst of the greatest trials, that one would suppose them proof against the feeling of fear. The sight of death cannot alarm these noble characters; and the poet has justly said that even on the ruins of

* Is it necessary to remind the reader of the sense of these sacred words of the Gospel, and explain these apparently contradictory sentiments—the desire to save us and the fear of death? The explanation is found in this word—*the Man-God*. He says His soul is sad and troubled. It is His humanity that is sad, that is in fear. The Godhead is in peace, and is always the strong God. There is nothing finer than the explanation given by St. Ambrose of this mystery: 'It is not God who is sad and who is in fear; it is His soul. The Divinity is not subject to these weaknesses. It is not the divine wisdom, the divine being, but the human soul; for He took a soul like unto mine, a body like unto mine. When He said, "Thy will, not Mine, be done," He meant the *human* will by *His* will; but by the will of His Father He indicates that of the Divinity—of God. But the will of God the Son cannot be different from that of the Father; and as there is but one Divinity, there can only be in God one and the same will.'

the world the just man, strong in his clear conscience, would stand immovable and firm. But here we see our God trembling, and asking that His chalice may be removed from Him! Yes, to console His children and faithful friends, He wished to know and experience this infirmity, that He might strengthen them in their day of sorrow. He was afraid.

But what was the cause of His great fear? What could this all-powerful and eternal God fear, who until then had laughed at the rage of His enemies, and passed through the midst of them, and none dared raise a hand nor endure His look? 'But He, passing through the midst of them, went His way' (Luke iv. 30). Ah, it was because at that moment, and in that hour of darkness, Jesus not only saw, but endured all He was to suffer in His Passion; all appeared at the same time to His Heart, and weighed down His soul. The chalice was drained to the dregs by those lips, and He was steeped in the sorrows of death.

God gives us to drink only a few drops at a time of this chalice of bitterness in life, and when it seems about to approach our lips we are afraid. There is no man able to drink in one day all that will be poured out to him in a year. The God of mercy has pity on us; there is sufficient sorrow for every day of this sad life. But, I repeat, Jesus saw all; He suffered everything in His Heart, and at the sight He was crushed under the weight of those sufferings which menaced Him. He

trembled, and was in fear ; in fear of accusations and false witnesses ; in fear of imprisonment, scourgings, and thorns ; in fear of the cross, and that lance which would pierce Him after His death ; in fear of death itself and the tomb. At sight of all these torments, He is terrified, and falls trembling to the ground, which is moistened with His blood, that is to say, with the tears of His Heart.

Consider Him in this state ; hear the plaints He makes to His Father. See Him approach His Apostles, seeking strength and help from them. Alas, they do not even answer Him ! Disappointed in His hopes, abandoned by all the world, Jesus returns to the shelter of the trees, again to repeat the same prayer of sorrow and submission : 'O My Father, remove this chalice from Me ; nevertheless, not My will, but Thy will be done' (Matt. xxvi. 39).

We can understand from this prayer what was the extremity of His weariness and fear ; and yet Jesus had so desired this day. Speaking on one occasion, when His Heart was longing to make sacrifices on account of the plenitude of its love, He said, 'A baptism of blood awaits Me, and I earnestly desire to be baptised in it.' Now the hour has arrived for this baptism, and He is in fear. He does not shrink, but He tremblingly prays to His Father to take pity upon Him, and remove this day from Him, if in accordance with His will. 'Let this chalice pass from Me.'

O Heart, victim of love, grant us grace to

understand Thy sorrows, Thy tender devotion! May we have recourse to prayer in our days of trial and fear, following Thy example; for that alone can prevent us from sinking into the abyss of despair or apostasy. Let Thy weakness be our strength, and Thy fears assure us of victory.

You will conclude this and the following exercise by the prayer to the agonising Heart of Jesus. It was a beautiful and holy thought of that priest who in our time was inspired to invoke the Heart of our Saviour in His agony, to invoke Him not only for ourselves, but for those who die each day. He founded a pious association, in which the aid of Heaven is continually invoked for the souls about to enter into eternity. There is no more touching prayer than this to the agonising Heart of Jesus. Recite it to-day and the two following days.

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

STUDY OF THE HEART OF JESUS IN HIS MYSTERIES.

2. *Mysteries of Sorrows: the Agony (continued).*

'Dolor meus super dolorem, in me cor meum mœrens.'
'My sorrow is above sorrow; my heart mourneth within me' (Jer. viii. 18).

It is impossible to read this passage of ruin and tears without being touched by compassion. Jeremias seems not only to have seen from afar, but to have felt the profound sorrows of the Heart

of Jesus in his own soul. He alone has given to the sorrowing Church those sacred songs which respond to the plaints and groans of her Divine Spouse. 'See,' says she, 'if there is any sorrow like unto my sorrow.'

But let us not forget that suffering is the measure and proportion of His love for us ; for it was out of love for us that the Divine Heart desired to suffer for us. 'He loved me, and gave Himself for me.' See if any love can be compared to His.

We will return to the Garden of Gethsemani ; for there are yet two sufferings of His Heart to contemplate, the two greatest of the Passion—Sorrow and Agony.

I. The Sorrow.—This was a mortal sorrow, a grief sufficient to have caused the death of our Lord. The God of truth has revealed this to us, and when we think of that sweat of blood it is not difficult to believe it. His death would not then have been at Calvary ; He would not have died upon the Cross, but at the foot of those solitary trees, and on that night, unless a divine miracle had retained His soul in His adorable body. 'My soul is sorrowful even unto death' (Matt. xxvi. 38 ; Mark xiv. 34). It is the God of truth who tells us here that He would have died of such sorrow.

But of what nature was this bitter sorrow, and what the cause of grief so profound as to tear and break the Heart of Jesus? He alone could tell us the secret of His sorrow. That which so weighed on Him, and caused Him nearly to die of grief, was

sin, all those sins of men for love of whom He desired to immolate and sacrifice Himself. This meek Lamb bore all the sins of the world, and we see Him, as it were, immolated and covered with blood. 'He was bruised,' says the prophet, 'under the weight of this grief, for the sins of His people, and to save them from death.'

It was sorrow that made Him weep tears of blood; and this blood also teaches us what must have been the violence of the sorrow caused by the crushing weight of our iniquities upon His Divine Heart.

Let us try to explain this thought by the sublime and poetical words of St. Augustine: 'Tears,' he says, 'are the heart's blood. When a heart is crushed by some great sorrow, overwhelmed with grief, its blood must flow; in flowing from the channel of the eyes it changes its name and colour, this blood of the heart then becomes tears, and it is the heart that weeps; a tear is a drop of blood.'

So much for ordinary sorrows and tears; but where a heart is not only crushed and overwhelmed by sorrow, but suddenly pierced and torn by a keen and penetrating grief; if, in a word, it is bruised, broken, and all but torn to pieces by the pressure of an incomparably heavier grief, you can understand that this heart's blood could no longer flow in a natural manner and follow the usual course, but would find outlets through all these wounds at once. Thus it is that the saints explain this mystery to us of the abund-

ant sweat of blood which covered the adorable body of Jesus, and even fell to the earth, so much was He crushed and bruised for our sins. 'And His sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down upon the ground' (Luke xxii. 44).

You have never yet seen tears of blood. You may see them then now, flowing before your eyes; they flow from the Heart of Jesus, and for love of you. He gives you at this moment all He has to give, His blood and tears; but because this God loves you with an infinite love, He wishes to give even more, and so, as some drops of blood remained in His Heart after His death, the cruel lance opened it, and from this last wound you will see the last tears of blood.

Meanwhile, what did Jesus do during this mortal sadness, and while bathed in this sweat of blood? What did His Heart say to His Father? He continued His prayer, ceasing not to repeat this cry of distress and anguish. 'If possible, let this chalice pass from Me, O My Father; but Thy will, not Mine be done!' Then He seeks His Apostles, whom He finds overcome, and who have naught to say to Him. He looks and seeks in vain; there were none to console Him; again He groans and prays and weeps. See if there is any sorrow comparable to this sorrow, if ever there was any love like unto this love.

Do not forget when in sorrow that your soul can only avoid death by prayer. 'Is any of you sad, let him pray' (James v. 13). It is only

prayer that can prevent you from falling into abysses of discouragement, dejection, and despair. Prayer will always strengthen you; will often console you. Address yourself to this Divine Heart, that has suffered so much. He will have compassion on you; He will teach you to suffer with love; and sufferings are made much less bitter by love.

II. The Agony.—This last suffering of the Heart of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemani is, without doubt, the most severe of all, and the most difficult of explanation. The word *agony* means struggle or combat. It is the supreme wrestling of life with death; the moment when this cruel death is about to triumph, when it separates and divides; it is the dolorous passage of light to darkness, of life to death.

But for Jesus it was also the sight and consciousness of the frightful inutility of His sufferings with regard to so many of those souls whom He wished to save. He was about to die; already His Blood was flowing, and He saw many souls that would be lost and reject the grace of salvation; then it was He said to His Father with tears, '"What profit is there in My Blood?" (Ps. xxix. 10.) If I cannot save them why must I die, and shed all My Blood? O My Father, remove this chalice from Me!' With His face prostrate on the earth, He looked into the depths of the abyss, and there He saw all those unfaithful souls who would plunge themselves into the depths; on that very day He saw Judas descend, one of His

own disciples, whom He would gladly restore to life and love.

To understand this dolorous agony, we must know how much Jesus loves souls, and desires their salvation ; how much He has already suffered, and still suffers, to save them. This good Master said to the Blessed Margaret Mary that His love for her was such that He was ready to endure anew all the torments of His Passion, and that for her alone He would have instituted the Adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist. This revelation of His Heart seems to comprise the profound secret of the supreme dolours of His agony. To love men infinitely, to suffer and die for these souls, and yet to see them perish eternally ! 'My sorrow is above sorrow ;' this was the most terrible of all sufferings for this Divine Heart. 'My Heart is sad within Me.' You will learn in this exercise and in this mystery, not only to compassionate the sufferings of the Heart of Jesus and to console Him, but also learn from His example to suffer ; for there are pains for all men to suffer, similar to those which God was willing to undergo for love of us. Is it not true, first of all, that an inexorable grief attaches itself to the life of nearly every man, as Bossuet has said ? Have you not experienced this yourself ? Is it not also true that there are vague fears and sudden terrors which may seize upon the soul ? And have you not felt this fear more than once in your life ? Above all, is it not true that there are many sad and

melancholy hearts, hearts torn and broken, souls that are misunderstood and unappreciated, for none respond to their sighs? Ah, dear reader, you know it well; there have been these days of anguish and tears in your life, and there will yet be more.

When your heart bleeds, then remember, at least, to pray as Jesus did, and fear not to say, as He Himself said to His Father: 'O my God, remove this chalice; it is too much, I can bear no more!' But also add, as He did: 'Nevertheless, O my Father, as Thou wilt; Thy will be done, not mine!' And by virtue of this divine prayer your heart will be consoled, or, at least, it will always be strengthened, as Jesus was, to whom an angel descended; and this angel, instead of removing the chalice, presented it to His lips. At the moment too that Judas came near to betray Him, and His enemies to take Him, Jesus said, 'Behold them; let us go.' He who was in such fear, fortified by prayer and the vision of the angel, leads the way, and goes with His murderers to His death. 'Arise; let us go hence.'

The friends of the Heart of Jesus will love often to renew the consideration of this mystery, and the sufferings of His love. Their good Master will not fail to show that He is sensible of their pious recollection and endeavours to share in His sorrows. He asked this of His faithful spouse, the Blessed Margaret Mary, and she united herself by fervent prayer, every Thursday and Friday

night, to her Celestial Spouse, during the three hours of His agony, called the Holy Hours, and particularly from eleven o'clock to midnight of Friday. She loved to suffer during those precious hours, in which Jesus loaded her with His choicest favours. See if you could not sometimes practise this pious exercise on the first Friday of the month, for example; but, above all, on the night of Thursday until Good Friday; you may be sure it would be one of the most efficacious means of glorifying the Heart of Jesus Christ, and of learning to live from His life and love.

Conclude with the prayer to the agonising Heart of Jesus, as yesterday.

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

THE AGONY OF THE HEART OF JESUS IN THE TABERNACLE.

'Tristitia mihi magna est, et continuus dolor Cordi meo.'

'I have great sadness and continual sorrow in My Heart' (Rom. ix. 2).

We may well apply these words of the holy Apostle to Jesus Christ; and so much the more, as the Divine Saviour Himself repeated them to the Blessed Margaret Mary, the faithful spouse of His Heart. He often spoke of His sufferings,

and of the pain caused Him by men's ingratitude. One might almost say that this good Master, unable to bear any longer the weight of His sorrows alone, sought to share them with her, or at least that He wished her to pity them.

The sentiment of holy compassion is so conformable to the spirit of true devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, that the Church, in the solemn office of the feast, seeks to inspire us with it incessantly, and to ask it of God with tears and prayers. Now it is Jesus Christ Himself who, in the sacred liturgy of this beautiful feast, urges us to take part in His sufferings ; at another time it is the faithful soul who seeks to express to Jesus its desire to console His Heart by suffering for His glory.

To-day we shall meditate upon the agony *in the tabernacle.* This is one of the most beautiful subjects in this little treatise ; certainly, in practice, it is the most agreeable to our Saviour Jesus Christ, and consequently should produce in our souls the most precious fruits of grace ; and for this reason : the chief end, the true spirit of devotion to the Sacred Heart, is compassion for the sorrows of our God, and to console His Heart by making reparation for the outrages heaped upon Him in the mystery of the Eucharist. This is precisely the object we propose to ourselves in this exercise, and the grace we shall ask for.

We shall find striking analogies between the immense sorrows of the Heart of Jesus in the Garden of Olives, and those of His mystical life in

the Sacrament of His love, and we will endeavour to console Him better than His Apostles did.

Jesus is exposed, in this mystery, to four terrible sorrows, which afflicted His Soul at Gethsemani : weariness, fear, sadness, and agony.

I. *Weariness.*—In how many tabernacles must not the Divine Saviour experience this weariness ! I cannot write this word without feeling deeply amazed and distressed. I hope the pious reader will not be able to read it either without being much moved by it, for it is as true as it is sad. Scarcely can Jesus descend upon our sacred altars, or be shut up in those prisons of love which we call tabernacles, but He must commence to feel weariness, for He will shortly be left there alone, and often He will be abandoned and forgotten. There are even many churches where the sanctuary-lamp is neglected, that sacred flame which should ever burn, and protest against the indifference of men.

You will, perhaps, say that the angels always adore Him. True, and these peaceful angels must often weep in the solitude of our temples, and groan over our ingratitude. But do you not know that it is not for the angels that our God dwells on our earth ? He reveals Himself to them in the glory of heaven, where the sublime Seraphim adore Him with trembling. It is for us, for us alone, that He is willing to remain in our churches ; the tabernacle is His house and ours. The tabernacle of God is with men—and they

abandon Him! In numbers of sanctuaries He remains alone, solitary, during days and nights, during whole weeks. How could He fail to be weary? Sometimes His Heart rejoices and hopes, when one of His children enters His temple, doubtless to visit Him; but, alas, too frequently these visitors are but languid and loveless souls, and they console Him no more than His Apostles did who slept near Him during His agony: they love Him not, they hear Him not, they scarcely speak to Him; and He continues His sorrowful prayer: 'O My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, Thy will be done' (Matt. xxvi.).

Ah, remember this poor Solitary of the temple; visit Him from time to time in the most deserted churches, and be sure that He will be touched by your remembrance of Him, and will bestow His graces upon you. The more lonely and deserted you find Him, the more sensible will He be of your kindness. The saints have taught us this secret of the spiritual and interior life. They loved to pray in poor and desolate churches.

II. *Fear.*—You understand now this second sorrow, and your mind at once perceives the analogy between the sufferings of Gethsemani and those of the tabernacle. 'He began to be afraid.' If there are churches in which Jesus joyfully dwells, because He is sure to find there pure and faithful souls, who visit and adore Him, so there are many into which He cannot descend without

trembling, foreseeing that there He will be soon forsaken and abandoned. He knows that He will daily see there indifferent, impious, and unbelieving souls. How many cold and languid hearts! what irreverences and scandals, profanations and sacrileges! And a Judas, in a soul soiled with crime, does not fear to sit at the Lord's table, and betray Him to death! 'He is in fear.'

But you will reassure and defend Him. Let Him find sincere love in your heart, a lively faith and generous sacrifices: He will be consoled, and will bless you; He will pray for you in the silence of the tabernacle; for it is in these moments of fear, according to the expression of the prophet, that He seeks for some friend to weep with Him: 'I looked for one that would grieve together with Me' (Ps. lxviii. 21).

III. The *sorrow* of the Heart of Jesus in the tabernacle is unto death, as in the Garden of Olives. 'My soul is sorrowful, even to death.' He has frequently revealed to us the cause of this bitter grief, which is the same as at Gethsemani—I mean the weight of our sins crushing His Divine Heart. '*Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world;*' and He falls, bruised beneath the weight of all this world's iniquities. He bears the sins of His priests and people; He ceases not to ask for pardon, and to implore mercy for them, by virtue of His precious Blood, which flows incessantly upon the sacred altar-stone (Heb. vii. 25), 'always living to make

intercession for us.' He prays ever with tears, and His Heart, victim of love, will shed this precious Blood for us to all ages.

What can we, then, do to console Him? We will weep and pray with Him, especially at the Holy Sacrifice; we will offer the Blood and tears of this august Victim for poor sinners. A voice is heard demanding vengeance for crimes; but the Blood of the Lamb speaks more loudly, and asks for mercy. This is that living Host which is slain upon the altar of the Most High. 'I saw a Lamb as it were slain' (Apoc. v. 6). Come, let us adore and weep at the foot of His tabernacle.

IV. The *agony* on the holy altar is, as in the Garden of Olives, the most severe of the four sufferings of the Heart of Jesus. There can be no more bitter drop in the chalice of sorrow than the thought and perception of the inutility of all one suffers for those one loves. Suffering is gladly endured when love demands it; but that this sacrifice should be useful to those for whom the immolation is made, is always desired and hoped for. But to suffer and die for the ungrateful, to feel and to know that so much devotion will avail nothing, is a greater torment than death itself; it is agony itself, prolonged without end.

Jesus in the tabernacle sees the inutility of all His sufferings in this mystic death; He knows that the effusion of all His Blood can never save or purify many souls who will refuse to come to Him to be cleansed. He calls and invites to

His sacred table; He prays, and even threatens; He has made a law which condemns to eternal death all who will not accept His invitation, and who have not eaten of the bread of life. Notwithstanding all His sweet promises, and all the penalties with which He threatens us, He sees the greater number of men stubbornly turn away from Him, and ungrateful souls who excommunicate themselves, even to their death. And at this sad sight His Heart, broken with sorrow, does not cease to complain to Heaven: 'What profit is there in My Blood?' He repeats His sad prayer of Gethsemani: 'O My Father, remove from Me this chalice;' and that of Calvary: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!'

This is the life of Jesus Christ upon our altars. He prays, and during these long ages of agony in the tabernacle He has never ceased to pray; for the sufferings of His Heart began on the day He instituted this mystery of love, and will only end with time; for He will remain there till the consummation of ages, praying and weeping as in His agony in the Garden of Olives, during those three mortal hours. He prays incessantly in this solitude, and will always intercede with tears for sinners: 'always living to make intercession for us' (Heb. vii. 25). He prays *with His whole Heart*, as St. Anselm says in his interpretation of this text; for it was, he says, at the hour of His Passion that He offered His prayer to God. But what a prayer! the humblest and most urgent; a

prayer inspired by all the tenderness and love of His Heart. It was in His agony that He prayed with earnestness and tears. The Apostle adds that this prayer of the Son of God was worthy to be heard, and that His Father heard it. Can our hearts fail to be touched by it? He addresses Himself to all, to His disciples and His friends.

He asks us to take pity on His sorrows, His isolation, to support Him in His terrors, to console Him in His sufferings. He asks us to respond to His complaints and His wishes, to strive, by frequent visits and fervent Communions, to make reparation for so many outrages and ingratitudes, which never cease to wound His Divine Heart.

Yes, God will be consoled by all those who come during these holy hours to weep with Him; and as He recompensed those on the day of His Passion who rendered Him any service, or took part in His sufferings, He will not fail to reserve His choicest benedictions for you, if you compassionate the still more cruel sorrows of His agony in the tabernacle.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

STUDY OF THE HEART OF JESUS IN HIS REPROACHES.

'Saturabitur opprobriis.'
'He shall be filled with reproaches' (Lam. iii. 30).

We will continue our studies of the Heart of Jesus as it is revealed to us in the sacrifices and dolours of His Passion. Soon after the hours of agony in which the good Master had delivered up His soul to so many sufferings, we find Him in the hands of His enemies, who overwhelm Him with insults, and conduct Him to death by a series of tortures each more cruel than the last. It was in the midst of all these indignities that the Heart of Jesus gave to the world the lesson of those great virtues,—meekness and humility; He drank deeply and in silence of these insults and reproaches, but His tearful looks said: 'Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart.'

Happy they who understand these words, and endeavour to imitate such an example! Their hearts will become like the Heart of Jesus, and they will possess peace in their souls. But how difficult is it, even with the teaching of so great a king, to love to humiliate oneself, and to keep silence when outraged! Those Christians who have drunk bravely, and even eagerly, the bitter cup of suffering, yet revolt at the bare thought of an insult.

The world prefers death to insult. It thinks an

injury of this kind can only be washed out in blood. You must shed your own blood or that of the man who has insulted you by word or gesture, which is considered by the world as an outrage.

O Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, speak to our souls, and render our hearts like Thine!

But which of all the scenes shall we choose of His Passion, in which He was filled with opprobrium? Here again we can only pause to contemplate three scenes in these sorrowful mysteries, but we shall see that in each of them our meek Saviour has given us an admirable example of silence and pardon. 'But Jesus held His peace' (Matt. xxvi. 63). I. He was silent at the pillar of flagellation; II. at the crowning with thorns; and III. at the court of Herod, when He was treated as a fool. These three pictures will form the subject of our exercise; in contemplating them the reader should enter into the Heart of Jesus to know the sentiments with which He was penetrated. Here we have only His looks to instruct us, for His divine mouth uttered not a single word.

I. The flagellation.—We may place this punishment among the exterior and corporal sufferings; His Blood flowed in streams under the scourgings of the soldiers, and His sacred flesh was torn and, as it were, ploughed by repeated blows. His bones, laid bare by the rage of His executioners, might have been counted. But even in all this there was more ignominy than pain, and His Divine Heart suffered more than His Adorable Body.

Consider Him, then, bound to this pillar, and delivered over to the gaze of the drunken and furious soldiers, who had stripped off His sacred robe. What an indignity for this God of all sanctity, and what an outrage! They scourged Him pitilessly, but not a complaint or sigh was heard. From time to time, in the midst of the sound of the scourging, the cries and shouts of the enemies of Jesus might be heard; but He Himself uttered not a word, and filled Himself in silence with these indignities. 'But Jesus held His peace.'

Enter into His Heart: there you will find peace and joy, because He glorified His Heavenly Father, and laboured by these humiliations to save our souls from the ruin which pride wrought in them from the beginning. Sometimes He raised His eyes, full of meekness, towards heaven; at others He looked on His people and His executioners, and forgave them with all His Heart. O Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, make my heart like Thine. Alas, how far are we from this perfection! A mere thought or recollection of words in which we think we see a want of regard or confidence is sufficient to trouble us; we are ever ready to give way to murmuring; we rebel, and even perhaps seek to avenge ourselves. 'Learn of Me,' says the silence of Jesus; 'I am meek and humble of Heart.' And repeat your prayer: O Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, make my heart like Thine.

II. The crowning with thorns.—Here, again, what sufferings when this crown was placed on the

brow of Jesus, with heavy blows, causing the long thorns to enter His sacred flesh! It is said that one of them pierced the right eyelid, which filled the eye with tears and blood. What pain! but at the same time what shame in this cruel torture! Suffering, however, was even exceeded by indignity, for in this act His executioners mocked at the most sacred title of the Man-God. He, the King of Glory, disguised as a mock king! What is this purple, this vile scarlet mantle which barely covers Him? And the sceptre? A paltry reed, which they snatch from His hand to strike Him with. But more than all, what a diadem, this crown of cruel thorns! The soldiers passing before Him bent their knees, and spat in His face, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews.' *Jesus autem tacebat;* and Jesus silently looked upon them with eyes full of forgiveness and love. 'In His tenderness He will keep silence,' says the prophet, and the Evangelist simply says He kept silence; but how eloquent is this silence! how His Heart will speak to yours if you enter thoroughly into the contemplation of this subject, and you will begin to understand this language of the Heart of God! 'Learn of Me.'

O Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, make my heart like Thy Heart. Repeat this prayer continually to-day, and ask for the grace to relish and follow these examples of meekness and humility. 'For let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus' (Philip. ii. 4).

III. Jesus at the court of Herod.—This is the

third picture for our consideration, and is perhaps the most amazing in the whole Passion. Our good Master was eagerly desirous of reproaches and insults, but on this day He was more than filled with them. If you meditate on this text of the Gospel, 'And Herod with his army set Him at naught' (Luke xxiii. 11), you will understand that if this was one of His most cruel sufferings, it is at the same time for us the most touching proof of His love. Let us never forget this rule—that suffering is the measure of love; the more one suffers the greater the love; in other words, His love is the cause of His sufferings, and His sorrows are in proportion to His tenderness; but His love is infinite; His sorrows therefore are immeasurable.

You will contemplate the Divine Saviour at the court of this impious King Herod.

Standing before this prince, He is surrounded by His enemies, who crowd to accuse Him before this odious tribunal. Herod begins by asking Jesus many questions, with curiosity, no doubt, also with some amount of interest, not unmixed at first with benevolence; for he hoped that this Man, of whom he had heard much, would please him by His discourse, and perhaps also by some miracle; this would have flattered him in the eyes of his courtiers, who looked on the Saviour with a sort of wonder. Their surprise increased greatly when they saw that Jesus did not reply, and persisted in keeping a profound silence, for He uttered not a word: 'But He answered nothing' (Luke xxiii. 9).

Meanwhile the enemies of Jesus profited by this circumstance to accuse Him with loud shouts and cries. Herod asked Him if He had not fed a great multitude in the desert with a few loaves only. Jesus was silent; and His enemies cried out, 'No, no; He is a seditious man, and an impostor!' The king continued: 'I have been told that You have healed the sick, and even raised the dead to life: is this so?' But Jesus was silent; and the Jews behind Him furiously cried out, 'No, no; He is a miserable wretch, an impostor; He is possessed of the devil!'

Herod, not understanding this sublime silence of our Lord, and ashamed of appearing ridiculous in the eyes of his court, pronounced a sentence against Him which greatly added to the sorrows of that day. He declared that He was a fool, and ordered Him to be clad in a white robe, which in Eastern countries is the mark to distinguish those persons who are out of their senses. 'And Herod, with his army, set Him at naught, putting on Him a white garment' (Luke xxiii. 11). O, how much there is in these words of the Gospel! You will meditate on them, and think of your Divine Saviour, dressed like a fool, in the midst of these unworthy courtiers, and in sight of the soldiers and Jews, who all mocked Him and overwhelmed Him with a thousand indignities. And Jesus bore all silently.

O, could you see Him, if you could approach so near to Him as only to touch the border of that

white robe, you would be for ever cured of all your pride, of thirst for glory, or esteem of men! Unhappy man! You wish to pass for a clever person, who speaks well, when Jesus your Saviour could not say one word, and passed for a simpleton! Look at Him, enter into His Heart, and strive to understand the meaning of those looks which He casts upon Herod and his cruel soldiers. What would this God say to you in His silence if not those words which reveal all the virtues of His Heart to us? 'Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of Heart.' Repeat your own prayer to Him: 'Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, make my heart like Thy Heart.' What an opportunity this would have been of showing His power of eloquence had He wished to speak, and how easily might He not only have confounded His enemies, but forced the proud Herod to fall at His feet! Calm and grand as He was in the midst of all this clamour, had Jesus but uttered that sentence pronounced by Him a few days previously; if, with that look and air of divine majesty, He had said, 'Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake' (Matt. v. 10), Herod and his courtiers, struck with admiration, would have cried out, 'What wisdom! Who is this Man, if indeed He is a man? Is He not rather a God?' But Jesus held His peace. Ah, how divine was this silence!

A man would have spoken; God alone could have kept silence!

Beneath this robe of ignominy recognise and

adore your God; admire His silence, and endeavour to imitate it. Pray often to Him during this day, and in your fervent colloquies implore continually for grace to understand and appreciate these great examples of virtue. There have been saints who, after meditating upon this mystery of insults and love, were so transported with the desire of doing some great things for the glory of God, that they have even wished to pass for fools. Many, indeed, have done so much that they have become so. They were followed about in the streets like persons who had lost their senses; children threw mud in their faces, shouted at them, and laughed at their folly; and still they kept silence, rejoicing in the depths of their souls that they had some traits in common with Jesus, who for love of sinners was content to appear as a fool. O, begin now to overcome this foolish pride which would destroy you; humble yourself before God, and under His powerful hand, lest He despise you, and allow you to fall. Pray to the Heart of Jesus to take pity on you, and to make you also love humiliations and the scorn of the world.

O Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, make my heart like Thy Heart.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

THE DEATH OF JESUS : TESTAMENT OF HIS HEART.

'Majorem hac dilectionem nemo habet, ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis.'

'Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends' (John xv. 13).

THIS, then, is a verity of faith, revealed to us by Jesus Christ Himself. To die for the sake of those one loves is the greatest, the surest proof of devotion and love that can be given ; and our Saviour, only a few hours after having uttered these sublime words, died for us upon the Cross. His Heart, after having rendered its last sigh, was again wounded and laid open by the cruel lance, as if to declare to us that even beyond death He loved us. 'For the charity of Christ presseth us : judging this, that if one died for all, then all were dead. And Christ died for all ; that they also who live may not now live to themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again' (2 Cor. v. 14, 15).

The Heart of Jesus reveals itself to us on Calvary, and in this revelation of love we will more particularly consider the three circumstances of—I. the death on the Cross ; II. the testament preceding His death ; and III. the wound of His Heart after death.

I. The death which is endured as a proof of love and devotion must be voluntary, it must be

an immolation of life freely and joyfully sacrificed; the more cruel the death under these conditions, the greater and more heroic is the love.

It is, therefore, sufficient to lay down these principles, to draw thence most important consequences. And first, was it not of His own free will that Jesus delivered Himself up to death for us? It would have been easy for Him to have avoided His enemies, as He had done up to that day; instead of which we find Him before them.

In that hour of the power of darkness, when with one majestic word He caused them to fall prostrate on the earth, where they tremblingly expected nothing but death, why did He raise them up again? Why did He leave Himself in their hands, whilst He forbade them to touch His Apostles? Wherefore, unless He wished and determined to give us this proof of His love, because He chose to die for us?

Not only did He sacrifice His life for us with firmness and resolution, but also with transports of joy and happiness. He bore the death of the Cross with a deep sentiment of joy, with which love inspired His Heart. 'Having joy set before Him, endured the Cross' (Heb. xii. 2). So glad was He to die for us upon this shameful Cross, that He made incredible efforts to reach Calvary; and, although He fell several times from weakness on the road, He arrived at length on the summit of the hill. At the first signal from the executioners He laid Himself down upon the instrument

of His suffering without a murmur, like a meek lamb, offering His hands and feet to be nailed to it. Yes, He died voluntarily, and freely offered Himself for us. And what a death, O my God! 'The death of the Cross' (Philip. ii. 8); the most cruel, and at the same time the most ignominious. Jesus rested only on His wounds, and heard nothing on all sides but blasphemies and shouts of laughter. In your meditations on this subject never forget the reflection so often pointed out, and which cannot fail to touch your heart—I mean that sorrow is here the measure of love; and as nothing can be conceived more terrible than the sufferings of our Lord's death, so you will understand that His love is infinite.

But there is yet another and perhaps more powerful consideration; at least it reveals to us in a more striking manner the love of the Heart of Jesus in this mystery; it is, that all these sufferings were not necessary to purchase our salvation, and consequently it was through an excess of goodness that He plunged Himself into these abysses of humiliation and sorrows.

A single drop of His Blood would have sufficed to save the world, but He willingly gave all, even to the last drop. Is it possible for hearts to remain insensible? Must they not begin now to understand and love a Heart so tender and generous?

II. The testament of the Heart of Jesus.—To speak correctly, this testament of love was left to

us in the sublime discourse at the Supper, upon which we have already meditated. But at the moment of His death, Jesus could not refrain from addressing a few more words to us—the words of a dying God, and which we regard as the touching expression of His last wishes, and the testament of His Heart. We will proceed to consider one of these sacred words, which has been interpreted by the Fathers and Doctors with the greatest care, and regarded by them more especially as the true testament left by Jesus at His death; that by which He bequeathed His Mother to us: 'Behold thy Mother; behold thy son' (John xix. 27).

It is certain that death is a solemn thing for all men, and the last words of a dying father are everywhere sacred. They are listened to with respect, they are faithfully remembered. It is the supreme memorial of a dying heart, which desires to live again in the heart it loves.

At the moment of the agony on the Cross, when Jesus was about to die, He looked down and saw His Mother standing beside Him in tears. He turned away His eyes. But on the other side He perceived His well-beloved Apostle St. John. Touched with love, He let fall from His lips, or rather from His Heart, those words which have been so carefully treasured, and which were faithfully related by the Apostle who heard them: 'Woman, behold thy son; behold thy Mother' (John xxi. 27). Sublime testament, sacred words, sufficient of themselves to reveal to us all the ten-

derness of the Divine Heart. Meditate on this thought, and you will understand all the goodness, compassion, and love comprised in these words. He no longer ventured to address Mary by the sweet name of Mother at the moment of leaving her: 'Woman, behold thy Son! I die; farewell. But I leave you a son, who will love, console, and protect you; he will replace Me. Behold thy son! And you, beloved disciple, I will not leave you an orphan. I die; farewell. But I leave you My Mother. Take care of her, love her as a son, love her as I have loved her. Behold thy Mother!'

All the Doctors of the Church agree in saying that this is a testament of love, the last will of the Heart of Jesus for us; for it is to us that He gave His Mother, and He leaves us to her as her children. The Apostle represented us at the foot of the Cross; and at that very hour the sorrowful Mother adopted us—nay, she bore us again with tears.

Let us carefully preserve this testament; never let us forget the last words of Jesus. Let us love Mary; and whatever may be our misery, and even our sins, let us have confidence in her. Can a mother forget her tender child? No, surely not. The Saviour says she even may forget; 'but I, never!' What a loving Heart! He gives us His Mother, and assures us that He loves us even more than she can ever love us. Who would not love Him, who loved us so much?

III. The wound in the Heart of Jesus, after His death.—We have already given a special exercise upon this sacred wound—on the sixth day of the First Novena ; but it is impossible not to add a few words upon so beautiful a subject, one in which the love of the Heart of Jesus was, as the prophet says, stronger than death. Why did the Divine Saviour permit or wish that His Heart should be thus opened? Love could have been His only reason. A few drops of His precious Blood remained in His Heart, and a few tears. He wished to give us all, and when the soldier drew out the lance there came from the wound that mysterious source of mercy. He wished this wound to be made after His death, that all men might enter into it, and hide themselves in that sacred wound, where they will be sheltered from the enemies of their salvation, and find always victory and peace.

'Let us go therefore with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid' (Heb. iv. 16). As He died for us, and loved us all, He offers an asylum in His Heart to all : to the just, as well as to poor sinners ; to the just, for therein is the treasury of every virtue ; to sinners, for therein is the source of all mercy, of all pardon. 'Let us go therefore with confidence,' &c.

Terminate this exercise by casting yourself at the foot of the Cross, as if now the water and the blood which flowed from the Heart of Jesus still

fell drop by drop upon your soul, to purify and strengthen it with life. Make an act of contrition and love with all the fervour with which you are capable.

Anima Christi, &c.

Soul of Christ, sanctify me, &c.

Triduum

IN HONOUR OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

The three Abysses, the three Devotions, the three Hearts.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

THE THREE ABYSSES OF THE HEART OF JESUS.

'Abyssus abyssum invocat.'
'Deep calleth on deep' (Ps. xli. 8).

THREE days only remain to us of this month of graces, and we have yet to meditate upon many beautiful subjects, titles, and virtues. We will endeavour to condense the Fourth and last Novena so much in this Triduum that, without extending each day's exercise, the pious reader may find a fruitful and easy subject for three days' meditations. We have to consider first *the three abysses* of the three Hearts; *the three devotions* of the

Heart of Jesus; and finally, *the three Hearts* of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

The Adorable Heart of Jesus is: I. An abyss of perfection; II. an abyss of sorrow; III. an abyss of love.

The heart of man is an abyss of miseries and ingratitudes; but deep calls unto deep; we must lose ourselves for ever in this Divine Heart.

I. The Heart of Jesus is an abyss of perfection and infinite sanctity, for it is the Heart of the God-Man. We have already touched upon this thought, which will now appear to us in a clearer light, if we have not been initiated in vain in these sacred studies. It is evident that the Heart of the God-Man must possess every good, tender, noble, generous, and devoted quality which can exist in the heart of man: it is also none the less certain that all these qualities are ennobled and heightened with every divine perfection. The whole man is in the heart of man; but the Heart of a God is the very sanctity and virtue of God.

Ah, who is able to fathom the depth, the breadth, the immensity of this abyss? It is the most august temple, the most holy sanctuary of the Divinity, the tabernacle of love! It is the heaven of heavens, the ineffable throne of eternal wisdom, the inexhaustible source of every grace, the adorable centre of all good, the unfathomable ocean of all perfections. 'O infinite treasure of the riches and glories of God!' exclaims the great Apostle. What heart ever had such sublime

thoughts, such lofty sentiments, or perfect devotedness as the Heart of Jesus? What heart ever made such entire sacrifices as this Heart of our God? Who could behold this abyss of goodness, holiness, and perfection, without at once entering into its depths? Who would not love this God, and the Heart of this God?

II. The abyss of sorrow.—The Heart of Jesus suffered so much that it is not possible to count its wounds and tears. The holy prophet compares these sufferings of our Saviour to an immense sea; and if you peruse the history of His life and death, you will see that never were sorrows like unto His sorrows. Three great rivers incessantly poured their bitter waves into this fathomless ocean—emblems of those varied sorrows which have become the sad heritage of life: sorrows of the heart, sorrows of the mind, and sufferings of the body. Consider what He suffered in His childhood and exile—what He endured from His enemies and ungrateful people, and even from His friends, who abandoned, denied, and betrayed Him.

To have a comprehensive view of so many sufferings in this meditation, you will do well to read, not only the book of the Passion, but to make an abridgment of it, bringing before your eyes, and, so to speak, touching and respectfully kissing, all the instruments of these sufferings; this will assist in reminding you of the chief sorrows of our Saviour. Thus the Cross, the crown of

thorns, the nails, the scourges, the denials, the sacred tunic, the scarlet mantle, the reed, the pillar, the lance, the tomb. Next, recall the names only of all those who caused Him to suffer: Annas, Caïaphas, Pilate, Herod, Barabbas, Peter, Judas. Again, the places that witnessed His greatest sufferings: the Garden of Olives, the prætorium, the prison, Calvary. You may next consider the nature of these varied sufferings, so numerous and so cruel: weariness, fear, sorrow, agony, fatigues, calumnies, perfidies, treasons, false witnesses, and the sentence of death. In a word, He knew every sorrow; He passed through every trial; He was the man of sorrows; but it was especially into His Heart that all the waves of bitterness were poured. 'Great as the sea is Thy destruction' (Lament. ii. 13). Who could resist being attracted and drawn into the depths of this abyss? Who could refrain from plunging into it—that is to say, who could help loving this Heart of God?

III. The abyss of love.—This infinitely loving Heart has loved us infinitely. He loved to the end. We have seen how He revealed His tenderness to us, in His looks and tears, in His sighs and transports; how He has displayed the feelings of His soul; above all, by what sacrifices He has proved His love to us. We must not here return to consider these grand evidences of a boundless love; but we will pause to contemplate the symbol of His Divine Heart, and strive to get

a better understanding of the meaning of the flames which surround and consume it. This sacred fire can be none other than that which He came to cast upon the earth, and desired to see on all sides. 'I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?' (Luke xii. 49.) He never ceased to burn with this fire of love. He loved His own; He loved His enemies to the end, all of them—His judges, murderers, and even the perfidious Judas. He asked forgiveness for them; He prayed, suffered, and died for them. O abyss!

But the great climax of this divine charity is the mystery of the Supper, the Divine Sacrament of the Eucharist, in which is the true triumph of love in the Heart of our God; for God though He is, He could do no more than give us Himself unreservedly. It was love that led Him to take this last and only means to render Himself beloved—to give us His Heart. *Behold this Heart which has so loved men.* O the height! O mystery! O prodigy of charity! Again we ask, who could contemplate this abyss of love without being drawn to it, without wishing to cast oneself into this ocean of flames, to be for ever consumed by love? 'Deep calleth unto deep.' Yes, we ought indeed to love the Lord our God, and His Son Jesus, the Saviour of the world.

As there is a sublime and universal law, the law of attraction, which regulates those great luminous bodies moving in space with such regu-

larity, so there is a divine and invariable law to direct the movements of the hearts and souls of men ; it is, that love draws love ; or, 'God is love.' All hearts must tend to this centre—drawn by this force, they must plunge into the abyss of love ; that is to say, all must love and adore the Divine Heart of Jesus. But, alas, how little is this glorious law known ! If, after having cast one look into the depths of this Sacred Heart, we contemplate the abyss of the human heart, we shall be terrified, for it is an abyss of misery and ingratitude. Let us be first humbled at this sight, and then, without being discouraged, we will look to God, who alone can save us, through the mercy of His Adorable Heart.

1. The heart of man is an abyss of misery. It is the impure source of every vice and the saddest passions, the germs and principle of which are seen even in the youngest children. One may indeed say that they are all born the children of wrath. And in youth evil increases with the rapidity of a torrent that overflows its banks, ravaging and destroying on all sides. O, who has not witnessed such storms, and deplored these tempestuous hours ! After lamenting this delirious transport of age without experience, the whole life of a man passes away like a dark cloud, ending in a fatal night with regard to all that concerns heavenly and eternal things. The heart of man, given only to earth and earthly things, becomes earth, and preserves even no remembrance of his

country ; has no aspirations or desires for a higher and better life, no hope of happiness or eternal life. O abyss !

There is nevertheless a resource, a remedy, for this evil. This abyss of misery may be overcome in an instant. O sinful or indifferent men, whatever you may be, 'Return, ye transgressors, to the Heart' (Isa. xlvi. 8). Return, all of you, to the Heart of your God. The abyss of mercy calls to, and will fill up, the abyss of misery. Come. It is there that the Lord shows His greatness ; there that the deep rivers flow, immense, and abounding with every grace : 'Because only there our Lord is magnificent, a place of rivers, very broad and spacious streams' (Isa. xxxiii. 21). Cast yourself into His Heart.

2. The heart of man is, above all, an abyss of ingratitude. Protected by the tenderness of so good a God, who has called Himself by the sweet names of father, brother, friend, and mother, loaded with graces, bought with the sacred Blood of this loving Redeemer, and so often nourished with His sacred Flesh, man still has no love for Jesus ; he forgets and despises His benefits ; he refuses Him his heart. Not only does he resist His law of love, but he even outrages Him in the very mysteries of His infinite charity.

'Ungrateful ones !' says Jesus, complaining to His Father, and to us also, if we will but listen to Him. 'They repaid Me evil for good, and hatred for My love' (Ps. cviii. 5). For us He was

born in a stable, and died on the Cross; He becomes our food in His mysteries; He has given us His Heart. It is thus that God, who wished to be loved, chose to live and die; yet He is not loved; His Heart is filled with the ingratitudes of nearly all men. O abyss of desolation and abomination! There is, then, O poor sinners, but one means of salvation for you. Return, ye transgressors, to the Heart of your God; hide yourselves in this refuge of mercy. Respond, O abyss, to this abyss, by a cry of tears, of love, and hope. Consecrate yourself to this Divine Heart; beseech Him to have pity upon you and all the sinners in the world. 'Deep calleth unto deep.' May this infinite abyss of celestial mercy absorb the abyss of profound earthly misery! Pray for those who do not pray, love for those who do not love.

This meditation must be concluded by a special and fervent prayer of reparation and consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

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TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

THE THREE DEVOTIONS OF THE HEART OF JESUS.

'Præbe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi.'
'My son, give Me thy heart' (Prov. xxiii. 26).

GOD gave us His Heart that we might give Him ours. Jesus only loved us so much that we might love Him in return. Love is, then, the whole of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He has said so Himself, whenever He vouchsafed to speak to His faithful spouse, the Blessed Margaret Mary. Our one thought and design in this little work has been to make known this Divine Heart, that it might be loved; 'That they may know.'

Represent your beloved Redeemer to yourself now, and during the whole of this meditation; He is before you still, just as He showed Himself to that pure and ardent soul. He looks benignly upon you, and says: 'Behold My Heart, that has loved so much; give Me thine, My son; give it to Me.' Reply to Him at once: 'Take it, Lord, and all that I have—my liberty, my intelligence, my all.' This is a sublime act of charity; it is all He seeks and desires—to be loved. This sentiment of love ought to have three effects or conditions; in other words, the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus comprises essentially three sorts of devotions: I. A devotion of affection or love; II. a devotion of reparation or tears; III. a devotion of imitation. You will see that there is

here sufficient for three exercises; but we shall so condense all these truths into one meditation, that you will find it to be one of the most important and practical of the whole month.

I. A devotion of love.—But few words will be sufficient to introduce this thought, if you have attentively read, understood, and retained all that has been said in the preceding exercises. The end of this beautiful devotion is love; what else does the symbol which Jesus Christ has revealed to us of His love say to our souls—that inflamed Heart that He gives us—if it is not to love Him? Of what does He complain, except that He is not loved? This is the new precept, as it was the old law: 'Thou shalt love.'

But how can we evidence our love to Him? What does He ask of those who love Him? He has plainly revealed this to His faithful spouse, and we will here consider in a few words this touching expression of His will. Love is shown in acts; it proves itself by devotion, by sacrifices; but Jesus exacts so little, He is satisfied with so little. See, He asks but a thought, a remembrance, a feast-day. There are so many ungrateful ones who never think of Him, and He wishes to be remembered. He is forsaken, abandoned; yet He asks to be visited from time to time. Almost all forget His benefits, His sufferings, and His death; He wishes them to be remembered. They refuse His requests; His sweetest invitations are rejected; His table is deserted; He entreats.

He commands, that they should come and eat His sacred bread. Even in this Divine Sacrament He is outraged; many are the cold and lukewarm hearts, the perfidious and sacrilegious, like Judas; He desires and wishes for pure hearts, faithful and generous hearts, who will love Him.

Your devotion of love, to be always agreeable to Jesus Christ, must also conform itself to His most intimate wishes, which have been clearly manifested. Thus you will never fail to celebrate His feast on the day appointed by Jesus Himself, the Friday after the Octave of the Blessed Sacrament. Never forget this. Let this Communion be the most fervent in the whole year. You will endeavour also to consecrate to Him the first Friday in each month; you will do your utmost to communicate on that day; you will renew your act of consecration to the Divine Heart, and make reparation. At least once in the year you will go through the exercise of the Holy Hour, from Thursday night to Good Friday; perhaps even once each month, on the night preceding the first Friday, the day of the Sacred Heart. Yet more, perhaps, in imitation of the Blessed Margaret Mary, you will perform this devotion every Friday. If our Lord asked it of you, as of her, could you be able to refuse Him this proof of love?

II. A devotion of reparation or tears.—We have often said what was the essential nature and chief end of the devotion to the Sacred Heart; and in explaining the devotion of love we have

again shown what it is we have to strive to make reparation for, and how our good Master Himself has revealed that we can console Him for these indignities and outrages. It is not therefore our intention to dwell longer on this thought; but we eagerly seize this opportunity of saying a word upon the most simple, and at the same time the most efficacious, means of entering upon this way of reparation: it is the practice of Communion of Reparation, of which we have already spoken a little.

This great work is admirably adapted to console the Heart of Jesus. We may say that it was revealed to the blessed saint by Himself, since it is the consequence of His words to her, when He confided the secret of His sufferings and desires to her. This association was blessed by the Holy Pontiff, the immortal Pius IX., who regards it as an earnest of hope and salvation in these last days of indifference and impiety. It has been recommended and encouraged by almost all the Bishops of the Catholic world.

Of all who have spoken of this association with zeal and unction, the pious Bishop of Autun stands preëminent. This glory belonged to him by right, for it was in his diocese, at Paray-le-Monial, that the Lord Jesus vouchsafed to manifest His secrets of love and sorrow, and gave His Adorable Heart to us.

In a pastoral letter on All Saints' day, 1863 (a letter so admirable that we wish we could give the

whole of it), the prelate makes known to his diocesans his wish that this holy practice of the Communion of Reparation should be extended and propagated, giving as it does such glory to God, and insuring so many graces to the faithful soul. He shows the power that an association of this kind must possess for propitiating Heaven, and concludes by founding canonically this work in his diocese. He declares that he adopts and sanctions the regulations of Avignon, by which the associates are bound to communicate on the first Friday of each month, and once a week, to console the Heart of Jesus, praying on that day in a special manner for the actual wants of the Church, for the Sovereign Pontiff, and for France.

Pius IX. has given Briefs in favour of this work of Communion of Reparation, and numerous indulgences have been granted to the members of this pious association, who are already so numerous that more than thirty thousand Communions are daily offered to the Heart of Jesus, to console Him for the ingratitude of men. If the pious reader already belongs to this association, let him rejoice, and redouble his love and zeal, that he may induce other members to join. If he is not of their number, let him examine himself before God, weighing the advantages promised to these faithful friends of Jesus, and let him hasten to enter this holy union of hearts to console the Heart of his God.

III. A devotion of imitation.—This is the principal point, and the surest means of glorifying the

Heart of Jesus, to imitate His virtues. Our love without works would be but a barren love, as faith also without them is a dead faith. But which, amongst all the perfections of Jesus, shall we prefer? This good Master has Himself vouchsafed to direct us in our choice; He has reduced all His lessons to these words: 'Learn of Me,' says He; 'for I am meek and humble of Heart' (Matt. xi. 29). Had He, then, but these two virtues, or do these two virtues of His Heart surpass all the others? It would be ignorant and impious to think so, a blasphemy to say it. The God-Man possessed every virtue, and all in the same degree of infinite perfection. But meekness and humility are sufficient in themselves, because they comprise all the rest. If we imitate our Lord in these two virtues, it is enough. With happiness in this life, we are also assured of having one day the blessedness and glory of heaven. 'You shall find rest to your souls' (Matt. xi. 9).

Now in order that you may study and admire the meekness and humility of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, you will have but to recall to your minds here some of the circumstances of His mortal life. From the manger to the Cross, He has given us the most touching examples of these beautiful virtues. His meekness towards all men, great and small, rich and poor, just and sinners, friends and enemies, was truly incomparable. His humility amounted to complete self-abnegation. Learn first, and then love, to be nothing, to be

despised as He was, with Him, and for Him. 'Love to be unknown, and to be reputed nothing' (*Imit.*). But let this be a true humility; in a word, humility of heart like unto Jesus.

To encourage yourself yet more to the practice of these beautiful virtues, think on the promised recompense, the price attached to this divine lesson—I mean rest, peace, and happiness. 'You shall find rest to your souls.' He that is meek is always beloved; he attracts all hearts; he possesses and dwells in them by love. He who is humble can never have enemies or be envied; he is well received everywhere, and is happy and contented wherever he may be.

On the contrary, to fail in humility is sure to cause trouble, uneasiness, and sorrow. 'One is angry at being angry,' says the good St. Francis of Sales; 'and one feels humbled and grieved at having appeared proud.' Assuredly all the words of Jesus Christ are true, and truth itself; but these make themselves evident, and are felt in each day's experience. Reflect for an instant, and you will be constrained to admit that if you have been wanting in humility and meekness, you have been soon punished for it; and if at this moment you have some trouble, examine yourself a little, and you will see that you have been wanting in patience or meekness, or that you have spoken with vivacity or pride.

During this day often repeat one or other of the two following ejaculatory prayers:

Heart of Jesus, burning with love of me,
Inflame my heart with love of Thee.
O Jesus, meek and humble of Heart,
Make my heart like Thy Heart.

THIRTIETH DAY.

THE THREE HEARTS—JESUS, MARY, JOSEPH.

'Invenisti Cor ejus fidele.'
'Thou didst find His Heart faithful' (2 Esdras ix. 8).

We propose to conclude all our exercises with a simple meditation on the marvellous sympathies of the Hearts of Jesus, Mary, and St. Joseph. This will give us an opportunity of saying a few useful words upon these three Hearts, for we should regret to complete this book without having spoken of Mary and her glorious spouse. It appears to us even that if we can succeed in pointing out what constitutes these adorable sympathies, it will prove one of the most efficacious means of causing the Heart of Jesus to be better known and loved. We will now proceed to consider how these three Hearts were faithful in the mutual sentiments of a sweet and intense family affection. All is comprehended in this. No one is ignorant that relationships of this nature require only a perfect union of hearts, and that on this union depends the happiness of all the members of

the family. What family could ever be compared to the Holy Family, or where could be found a more perfect life than that at Nazareth?

I. Let us commence with a few words upon the Divine Child, who constituted the charm of that holy household. What must He have been to Mary, His Mother, to Joseph, His foster-father! What tenderness! what gratitude! what a HEART! to make use of a simple and familiar word, but one which suits our subject well. When the Virgin Mother carried Jesus in her arms, when she nourished Him with her virginal milk, the Heart of the Child-God was very near the Heart of His Mother! O, how they must have understood each other, and palpitated with the same sentiments! And when Joseph gently tended the Divine Child, and lulled Him to rest upon his breast, how these two Hearts beat in unison! Both Mary and Joseph could truly say to this Child that He was their true and only treasure, the God of their heart!

Thus much for His earliest infancy, before this God-made-Man had begun to manifest the other sentiments of His Heart. What can we say of His first smile, His first word, and of those tender and penetrating looks which revealed to Mary and Joseph His tenderness and love? What can we say of those intimate interchanges of feeling and sweet outpourings of affection between the Child and His Mother, or of the young apprentice of Nazareth with him who was really His master, His patron, and His foster-father? They all loved

one another so perfectly, their Hearts were so united, that the bare thought or fear of being separated caused immense sorrow to Mary and Joseph; this they proved by their words and tears on the day when they lost Jesus at Jerusalem; they thought then, for a short time, that they had lost the God of their hearts.

The Heart of Jesus was faithful in His love towards Mary and Joseph even to the end. At the hour of Joseph's death, Jesus and Mary assisted and consoled him: Mary with her prayers and tears; Jesus with the tenderest attentions, and by the hope of that heaven which was about to open to his eyes. From His Cross, Jesus gave to His Mother a last look of farewell, and a last word, which was a true testament of love. He was the God of their hearts, and never was there in the heart of any child so much love and tenderness as in the Heart of this God. Mary and Joseph alone could literally say those words so often lovingly repeated by fervent souls: 'I possess for all time, and I take everywhere, the God of my heart and the Heart of my God.'

II. Let us now meditate upon the Heart of Mary, that faithful Heart which was always the happiness and delight of the Heart of Jesus. The Heart of Mary is the sacred temple, the ineffable sanctuary and tabernacle of the Divinity; it is the cradle of love, where a God-Child rested, and the pure and fertile source whence He drew His life.

We will, in our abridgment of this subject, pause to consider only those two great passions of the heart, joy and sorrow, and we shall find that in these two sentiments the most pure and immaculate Heart of Mary has ever been not only faithful and sympathising, but intimately united to the Heart of Jesus her Son.

1. And first, with what transports was not the Heart of Mary filled, in the joy of hope, as in the happiness of possession! Before the mystery of the Incarnation she prayed continually and fervently to call down the dew from heaven. If Abraham and the other patriarchs trembled in expectation of this auspicious day, if Daniel by his prayerful longings shortened the time, and hastened the weeks and hours, what shall we say of a Virgin who was to bring forth this God of Love? But when this great mystery was accomplished; when the Word-made-Flesh reposed on the immaculate Heart of His Mother, as in a cradle; and when, in the grotto of Bethlehem, she saw the new-born Child, that God, her Son, whom she was to carry and nourish on her Heart, there is no language in heaven or on earth that can express the feelings with which she was animated and transported. Mothers are happy beside the cradle of the first-born child; but this was the Mother of God!

During the thirty years of the hidden life at Nazareth what touching scenes will you not find, if you enter fully into this meditation! What

sympathy in the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, whether they joined in prayer, or sweetly conversed on the most secret mysteries of the kingdom of God! In the course of the public life of Jesus there were fresh causes for deep joy in the Heart of His Mother: hearing His heavenly discourses, which impelled a woman of Israel to exclaim, jealous doubtless of so great a glory: 'Blessed is she that bare Thee!' or witnessing His many miracles, proofs of His tenderness and pity. Doubtless it was often at His Mother's entreaty that Jesus worked these miracles, as at Cana of Galilee. It is impossible to conceive the joy of her maternal Heart in all these circumstances, and the sympathy of sentiment with the Sacred Heart of her Son.

2. It will be sweeter and easier for you to meditate on the sorrows of this tender Mother. It was in these cruel trials of life that the ever faithful Heart of Mary manifested a more lively and perfect conformity to the thoughts of the Adorable Heart of her Divine Son.

Even before the Passion of Jesus, as she knew by reading the prophets all He was to suffer for the salvation of men, she began to bear the sword of sorrow, that sword which never ceased to pierce her Heart. At the birth of Jesus in the poverty of a stable her Heart was wounded by it; shortly after there were the anxieties of the flight into Egypt, and the long exile; and later, the loss of the Child at Jerusalem. All these mysteries were

a source of great sorrow for the tender and sensitive Heart of Mary.

But these were only the prelude to other and more cruel sufferings. It was during the Passion that the Heart of Mary truly shared all the sorrows of the Heart of Jesus. She saw her well-beloved Son in the horrible tortures of the scourging and crowning with thorns. She saw Him on the way to Calvary fall beneath the weight of His Cross; she saw Him nailed to this Cross; she heard His last adieux, His last cries; she saw Him die! And when He was dead, she received Him in her arms; she pressed Him to her Heart; she herself assisted to lay Him in the tomb, and there shed the last tears over Him. As her sorrows at this moment equalled her love, it is not possible to conceive her sufferings; for never could any human intelligence say or comprehend how much she loved this God, who was her Son. The fidelity of her Heart at this crisis was shown in uniting herself to the sacrifice of Jesus, and sharing His sufferings and love. 'Great as the sea is thy contrition' (Lament. ii. 13). You have but to contemplate in silence *the Mother of Sorrows* standing at the foot of the Cross.

These words lead us on to consider other admirable sympathies, which we cannot refrain from noticing. The similarity of titles would alone serve to define the perfect uniformity of characters, and consequently of Hearts. The reader will study and recall many of them; it will be suffi-

cient for our purpose to indicate the chief of them. Jesus is the Man of Sorrows; and Mary, the Mother of Sorrows. Jesus is our Advocate; Mary, the Refuge, the Advocate of Sinners. Jesus Christ is the Father of Mercy; Mary, the Mother of Mercy. Jesus, the Good Shepherd; Mary, the Divine Shepherdess. Jesus, the Prince of Peace; Mary, the Queen of Peace. Jesus, the Father of the Poor; Mary, the Mother of Orphans, &c. &c. This is enough; but I would urge the reader to seek out further resemblances; he will find true consolation and light in the search. Even in the perfect similarity of the touching symbol of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary we find proofs of the sympathies existing between them. Consider how they resemble each other. Both are surrounded with flames of love; both are wounded, and both have a crown: Jesus, a crown of thorns; Mary, a crown of roses. But how many thorns are hidden by these flowers! Glory, then, to the Heart of Jesus, our loving Redeemer and Master! All love to the pure and immaculate Heart of Mary, our Mother and the Queen of Angels!

III. We will say but a word of the Heart of St. Joseph, that this meditation may not be prolonged, as it will be easy for the pious reader to make up for our silence. By following the same plan it will be seen how faithful this Heart was to Jesus and Mary. Jesus, in His early childhood, was nearly always in the arms—that is to say, on the Heart—of Joseph, as his sweetest treasure. 'For

where your treasure is, there will your heart be also' (Luke xii. 34). It seems to us that these words may be applied in this sense. How boundless was the confidence with which Mary had inspired this chaste and faithful spouse! 'The heart of her husband trusteth in her' (Prov. xxxi. 11). These three Hearts of the Holy Family had absolutely the same thoughts and sentiments; the same tastes and aspirations heavenwards; whether they prayed together or conversed in their home at Nazareth, they expressed themselves in the same manner.

We must briefly refer to those touching sympathies which we cannot doubt must have manifested themselves at the death of St. Joseph. Contemplate this picture, and enter into the soul of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph; at this hour of separation and supreme farewells you will see how they loved each other. Mary kneels beside him; her tearful eyes express her grief, her tenderness, and gratitude. Jesus gently supports the head of Joseph upon His breast, His loving Heart revealing to the dying saint His keen emotions and regrets; at the same time He points out to him that heaven where he will so soon receive his crown. Joseph looks silently upon Mary, his faithful spouse, and upon Jesus, his Son and his God; but with what sentiments of perfect submission, peace, and love tempering the bitterness of the separation and of the last agony! Apply here again the rule we have given: that to know a

heart it must speak, and the language by which hearts express themselves is by looks, tears, sighs, transports of devotion, and sacrifices; you will then see that the Hearts of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph must always have thoroughly understood and tenderly loved one another, in life and until death; you will see that there never has been, nor could be, so perfect an understanding, so profound a sympathy, or so absolute a resemblance, as between these three Hearts.

Never, then, let us separate them in our love; and let us terminate our exercises by a fervent prayer to the Hearts of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, have pity on us.

Immaculate Heart of Mary, Heart like the Heart of Jesus, pray for us.

Heart of Joseph, always faithful to Jesus and Mary, intercede for us.

Deo Gratias.

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